Bishop Paul N. Garber

METHODISM

IN

YORK COUNTY, VIRGINIA

The Church's one foundation
Is Jesus Christ her Lord
She is His new creation
By water and the Word.

By

Mrs. Elizabeth Hogg Ironmonger

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FOREWORD

Francis Bacon has said, "Reading maketh a full man; conference a ready man; and writing an exact man; and therefore, if a man write little, he had need have a great memory; if he confer little, he had need have a present wit; and if he read little, he had need have much cunning to seem to know that he doth not".

Mrs. Elizabeth Hogg Ironmonger in her "History of Methodism of York County" has surely brought these virtues of which Bacon reminds us into focus. In her diligent and constant research of the records, both church and legal, she has given us a clear, readable documented account of the noble heritage of our faith in this area.

Mrs. Ironmonger writes with a simplicity of style, giving the facts as she finds them and knows them in her own day. This book is heartily commended to those who have an interest in the history of our faith, and from its pages one will get a deep appreciation of Methodism's contribution, not only to York County, but to our Commonwealth as well.

Rev. Forrest S. Wagoner
Zion Methodist Church
Sept. 13, 1959

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE

Foreword v

Part I

Chapter I Religious Background—Pioneer Methodists 11

Chapter II Williamsburg Circuit 15

Chapter III Deed for the First Methodist Church Property 19

Chapter IV Deed for the Zion Methodist Church Property 21

Chapter V York-Warwick Circuit, 1843 25

Chapter VI Deed for the Providence M.E. Church, South, Property 27

Part II

Chapter I From 1852 to 1862 31

Chapter II From 1866 to 1880 41

Part III

Chapter I York County Methodist Churches, 1880-1890 63

Chapter II York County Methodist Churches, 1890-1902 71

Chapter III York County Methodist Churches, 1903-1923 77

Chapter IV York County Methodist Churches, 1923-1959 85

METHODISM IN YORK COUNTY, VIRGINIA

PART I

CHAPTER I

Religious Background—Pioneer Methodists

In this year, 1959, there are five Methodist Churches in York County, Virginia, each with a full-time pastor, a growing congregation and buildings suited to the needs of each church.

The religious background of the founders of Methodism in York County may well be briefly reviewed.

The settlement on the south side of York River (which was really the northern frontier of the Virginia Colony), was made in 1630 and was called Chiskiack.[1] In 1631-32 the York[2] plantation was patented a mile below the present Yorktown. In the early 1630s the lower part of York County, called the "new Poquoson"[3] was being settled by people coming from Elizabeth City Corporation, part of which was known as "Old Poquoson."

When the Virginia Colony was laid off into eight original shires in 1634[4], the present York County, named then, 'Charles River County', was one of those shires. Its name was changed to York[5] in March 1642/3.

It is believed that these earliest settlements in York County formed plantation parishes. The York County records help to establish proof of Chiskiack Parish in 1635 or earlier, New Poquoson Parish in 1635, York Parish in 1638. Middle Plantation, later called Williamsburg, was at first included in Chiskiack. Then it became the independent parish of Bruton, part of which continued to be in York County. Williamsburg remained partly in York County through the 1700's and 1800's and until 1941.

This was the established Church of England. As time went by names of parishes were altered and boundaries of same varied to meet the changing needs of the people.

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1. Hening, Statutes at Large I, page 139.
2. Tyler's Quarterly I, page 237.
3. York County D. O. & W. I, page 51.
4. Hening, Statutes at Large I, page 224.
5. Ibid I, 249.

There were times of unrest, and dissenters began to be heard, among them being Quakers[6], regular Baptists, separate Baptists, Methodists.

Before the Methodist Church had been formed at the Christmas Conference in Baltimore in 1784, Methodism had touched the religious life of York County by the visits of pioneer Methodist preachers.

George Whitefield preached in Bruton Parish Church Williamsburg in 1739, when on his way to join John Wesley in Georgia. The Virginia Gazette[7] carried the following account of his service in the issue for December 14-21, 1739: "Friday, December 21, 1739

Williamsburg December 21 — On Sunday morning last, the Rev. Mr. Whitfield° preached at our Church, on these Words, *What think ye of Christ?* There was a numerous Congregation, and 'tis thought there would have been many more, if timely Notice had been given of his preaching. His extraordinary manner of preaching, gains him the admiration and applause of most of his Hearers. He is gone to *Carolina,* on his way to *Georgia:* And 'tis said he intends to be here again next *April* or *May.*"

Joseph Pilmoor[8] also visited this area. It has been stated Joseph Pilmoor and Richard Boardman, the first two official Methodist representatives, came to the colonies in 1769, landing in Philadelphia on October 21 of that year. Through their extended tours into other colonies, it was Pilmoor who passed through Maryland, Virginia, North and South Carolina. He landed in Norfolk[9] on July 17, 1772 and preached to a small congregation there, then went to Portsmouth and preached, and then back to Norfolk where he held more preaching services (Pilmoor's Journal July 26, 1772); at the end of August he sailed up the James River, to Williamsburg.[9] On Sunday evening he preached in the State House yard. The Rector of Bruton Parish Church (the Established Church) closed the meeting and invited Pilmoor to dine with him, but being somewhat ill, due to "change of air and water" he declined the invitation.

6. York County, Va. Record Bk. 2, P 125.
7. Va. Gazette—Williamsburg, Va. William Parks, Ed 1739.
° In the quotation, the "e" was omitted.
8. Sweet W.W. *Virginia Methodism,* A History, P. 53.
9. Ibid p. 54.

From Williamsburg he journeyed to Yorktown, but was prevented from preaching by illness.

"*In 1772 Robert Williams* visited Williamsburg and organized the first Methodist Society."[10]

Francis Asbury wrote in his Journal October 26, 1780 of being in the vicinity of Williamsburg and said that his "Appointments lay down that way."[11]

Dec. 11, 1782 Asbury was again at Williamsburg. He said, "I rode to Williamsburg. . . . I preached in the James City Courthouse. The place has suffered and is suffering; the palace, the barracks, and some good dwelling houses burn't."[12] On Dec. 7, 1783 he was again at Williamsburg[13] "Found the people waiting; the key to the Courthouse being lost, or mislaid, I stood without, and was assisted on Acts 17:30,31. I feel some faith that God will call-out a people in this place."

Following the Christmas Conference in Baltimore Dec. 24, 1784 which lasted a week[14], Francis Asbury traveled to Virginia and North Carolina, preaching and explaining, day by day, the essential doctrines taught and held by the Methodists. On his return trip he came into Virginia on April 30, and by Monday, May 9th, 1785 he recorded:[15] "Set off for James City, came to James River, and missing the house where the ferrymen stay, I was detained some time before I found them. On Tuesday, the 10th, Had a large congregation at Chickahominy Church. I administered the sacrament to a number of communicants, and we had a very gracious season. On Thursday May 12, *Rode to York,* lately the seat of war. Here Lord Cornwallis surrendered to the combined armies of America and France. The inhabitants are dissolute and careless. I preached to a few serious women at one o'clock; and at the desire of the ladies, again at four o'clock. I came to Mrs. Rowe's. The son was once on our side; he has left us, and now we have the mother. I lodged in the poor-house."

10. Quoted from a Church Bulletin for Dedication Service of the modern Williamsburg Meth. Ch. Apr. 24, 1949, and from a letter by the Rev. James W. Brown (pastor) who stated that "some years ago one of the former ministers here (Wmsburg) looked up all available material on our history and we used his sketch in our Bulletin."
11. Francis Asbury—Journal—p. 315, Vol. I, 1821 Edition.
12. Ibid p. 352.
13. Ibid P. 363.
14. Ibid P. 378.
15. Ibid P. 385.

This was the first mention of Francis Asbury being in Yorktown. He was there again on January 23, 1787, when he wrote in his Journal:[16]

"Came off early, and preached in Yorktown, to some well behaved women. Dined with Mr. Mitchell, and went on to dear brother Weldon's, whose heart and hands were open. Wednesday, the 24th, according to appointment, I attended at Williamsburg. . . . I spoke with freedom on 'They made light of it.' I returned through the rain, but hope to receive no harm."

He was at Yorktown again Jan. 3, 1788[17] and also Dec. 31, 1789.[18] On Wednesday and Thursday December 29th and 30th he was at Williamsburg.[19] He said: "contrary to my expectations, I found there was an appointment made for me to preach in Williamsburg, being the day I had intended to cross the river. Thursday, 30th, I preached in the City of Williamsburg according to appointment. I felt much liberty; and had some hope that Providence was about to open the way for a work in this place."

16. Francis Asbury's Journal Vol. II, page 9.
17. Ibid P. 25.
18. Ibid P. 61.
19. Ibid P. 90.

CHAPTER II

Williamsburg Circuit

A careful study of the minutes of the annual conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church reveal the names of ministers of Williamsburg Circuit from 1785, together with other pertinent information. The circuit embraced the territory from Williamsburg to Old Point, thus including all of York County.

Williamsburg[20] circuit, 1785, Jeremiah Mastin, was minister, and the Elder over that area was Nelson Reid. In 1786 Thomas S. Chew was Elder; Levin Ross, was pastor of Williamsburg circuit.

In the year 1787 Stephen Johnson was minister and there were 217 white and 5 negro members in the Circuit. Leroy Cole was pastor in 1788, of Williamsburg Circuit.

In 1789 the Circuit of Williamsburg had two pastors, John Robertson and William Spencer, with 274 white and 60 negro members.

The membership had grown in 1790 to 536 white and 155 negro persons and the two ministers were G. Roszel and Nicholas Sebrell. The membership dropped off in 1791 to 473 white members, but there was a gain among the colored members, to 194. The ministers were James Meachem, and Benjamin Brown.

Williamsburg had 490 white, and 234 colored members in 1792 and the ministers were Pemberton Smith and Chris S. Mooring. In 1793 William Spencer and Laurence Mansfield served the Circuit, with a membership of 589 white and 241 colored members.

John N. Jones and Thos. Easter were on the Williamsburg Circuit in 1794 and figures of 423 white and 121 negroes made up the membership. In 1795 James Tolleson and Henry M. Gaines served the 390 white and 110 colored members.

20. Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1773-1828—Vol. I.

The lists of appointments by *States*[21] were first made in the year 1796. Thirty-two circuits for Virginia were recorded in the Minutes, among them being Williamsburg with 385 white and 97 negro members. William Mc Kendree and John Bonner were the pastors.

In 1797 Williamsburg and Hanover were reported as one circuit, with 639 white and 95 negro members, and three ministers, James Tolleson, Edward T. Rowsie and John Ellis, to serve them.

Williamsburg and Hanover in 1798 reported a combined membership of 650 white and 95 negro persons, but the pastors were listed, Edmund Ellis and Hill Jones for Williamsburg, and Archer Moody for Hanover. The following year (1799) the appointments were listed under Presiding Elders but not by named districts. Williamsburg - Hanover had two pastors, Humphrey Wood and Josiah Phillips. The membership was listed, Williamsburg 257 white, and 81 colored; Hanover 385 whites and 67 negroes.

In April, 1800 Bishop Francis Asbury again visited this area.[22] He was in James City County, then down the Peninsula to Hampton, and on Tuesday April 14, he wrote, "We rode back to York. I saw the grave where was buried the effigy of General Washington, at the probable place where Lord Cornwallis delivered up his sword."

The Conference Minutes[23] listed the ministers and their appointments for 1800 under Presiding Elders, but did not name any districts. Williamsburg reported 327 white and 74 colored members; Hanover's report read 255 white and 49 negro members. The ministers for the combined Williamsburg - Hanover area were Joseph Moore, James Denton and James Hunt.

In 1801 the first listing of Districts was made, with Williamsburg - Hanover being on Richmond District. Their pastors were William Davis, Daniel Ross and Thomas L. Douglas. The reported membership was 257 white and 57 negro for Williamsburg, and 318 white, 80 negro, for Hanover.

21. Ibid.
22. Francis Asbury's Journal Vol. II. page 373.
23. Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1773-1828—Vol. I.

In 1802 they were assigned separate ministers, Jeremiah King for Williamsburg and William Kenyon for Hanover, but the membership was a combined report of 642 white and 136 negro.

The two ministers for 1803 were assigned jointly to Williamsburg - Hanover. They were Nathan Jarrett and Robert Carter. Membership 236 white and 64 negro for Williamsburg; 316 white, and 68 negro for Hanover. The Minutes showed that Nathan Jarrett died October 28, 1803 in New Kent County, Va.

The Virginia Conference had four Districts in 1804, ... Newbern, Norfolk, Salisbury and Richmond. Williamsburg - Hanover had a membership of 519 white and 118 negro members, and only one minister was assigned to them, — Issac Hall; but the next year (1805) Williamsburg and Hanover had two preachers, Humphrey Wood and Joshua W. Kilpatrick, with the same membership as the previous year.

In 1806 the work was divided into two circuits; Hanover was given two ministers and Williamsburg also had two pastors. Those assigned the later were David M 'Masters, and William Arendell. Williamsburg membership was 564 white and 129 negro, while the other circuit had a membership of over 400. Stith Mead was the Presiding Elder of Richmond District.

Williamsburg was served in 1807 by Erasmus Hill and Robert Thompson and the membership had grown to 736 white and 147 negro members.

In 1808 the name of Richmond District was changed to James River District, with Stith Mead, Presiding Elder. Richmond Circuit was then on James River District as, was, also Williamsburg. Ministers for the latter were Pleasant Thurman and James Harris and the membership had grown to 783 white and 113 negro persons.

At that time the Eastern Shore of Virginia was under the Philadelphia Conference and Delaware District. Williamsburg continued on James River District for more than 25 years. The pastors for 1809 were Stith Meade, Robert Barnes and H. Hardy. 610 white and 74 negro members were reported for Williamsburg Circuit.

In 1810 there were five Districts in Virginia - Norfolk, James River, Newbern, Yadkin and Meherrin and very soon Raleigh

District was named. Ministers for Williamsburg were Cannellem H. Hines and T. J. Brockwell, who served 456 white and 58 colored members.

It has been generally accepted that much of the preaching of the early Methodists in local communities, was carried on by local preachers, under the guidance and leadership of the circuit ministers. One such local preacher was the Rev. Cyrus B. James, born in 1786 in that part of Gloucester County that later became Mathews. His father was clerk of Kingston Parish, Gloucester County, and lay reader in the Episcopal Church. The family came under the influence of the Great Methodist Revival of 1797 in that area,[24] and Cyrus B. James was licensed and made a local deacon in 1811 in York County, Va., where he had established his home after his marriage in Mathews County (formerly, Kingston, Gloucester Co.) to Mary White, February 28, 1811.

In 1811 the Williamsburg Circuit ministers were John Owen and Joseph C. Bell. There were 623 white and 129 colored members. Stith Mead and James Sandford served the circuit in 1812. The membership had gained two among the white people, but lost 54 negro members.

In 1813 Hezekiah M'Lelland and Abraham Trail were pastors for the 717 white and 87 colored members. There was a loss in numbers at the 1814 Conference report and only one minister, William Compton, was assigned to the Circuit of 666 white and 54 negro persons. In 1815 Jacob Hill was minister for Williamsburg Circuit, and 549 white and 81 negro members were reported. John T. Brame was the assigned pastor for 1816 and the membership report was 539 white and 48 negro members.

24. Francis Asbury's Journal Vol. 2–page 298.

CHAPTER III

Deed for the First Methodist Church Property

The year 1817 stands out as the time when organized Methodism took place in the lower section of York County.

"An Indenture[25] of bargain and sale between Elizabeth Carmines of the one part and George Topping, Abraham Dennis, John Dennis, Smith Bunting and *Cyrus B. James* of the other part . . . was proved by . . . and ordered to be recorded."

A deed[26] for one half acre sold by "Mrs. Elizabeth *Carmign* of the County of York and State of Va.", to the five men named above 'to be "Trustees in Trust for the use and purpose . . . and their successors in office forever in trust, that they shall erect and build a House or place of worship for the use of the members of the Methodist Episcopal Episcopal Church in the USA . . . 20th day of October, 1817." Signed "*Elizabeth Carmens*". Boundaries for the land are recorded in the deed and indentify it as the cite of the first Tabernacle Methodist Church, Poquoson, York County.

Thacker Muire and B. Stephens were appointed to the Williamsburg Circuit for 1817 and there were 484 white and 64 colored members. The service of Thacker Muire is verified by the following marriage notice:[27]

"I, Thacker Muire, minister in regular communion with the Methodist Episcopal Church, do certify, that I did this day celebrate the rites of matrimony, agreeable to the forms and customs of the said church, between Butts Roberts and Miss Nancy Robinson, both of the County of York. Given under my hand this 29th day of May 1817. (signed) Thacker Muire. Truly recorded, Sam'l Shield, Clc.

In 1818 Jacob Hill and Exum Chapman were the pastors for Williamsburg Circuit. There was a slight gain, there being 487 white, and 80 colored members.

25. York County, Va. Orders Book No. 9–1815-1820; p. 224.
26. York County, Va. Deed Book 8; 1809-1819–page 398.
27. York County, Va. Guardians Account Book 1780-1823, A page in this book marked "IX", listing some marriages.

It is probable that other Methodist Societies were holding services in York County about this time as the following court order would indicate: "On the motion[28] of Caleb Fisher and Robert Gibbons it is ordered that the society of Baptists, *or that of the Methodists* whenever they see fit, be permitted to use the Courthouse of this County for religious purposes, so that in such use the Courts of this County or the Superior Courts shall not be interrupted or disturbed during the sessions of said Courts, and provided they repair any damages done to said Courthouse arising from the use of it by them."

At a court held in Yorktown, Va. 17th day of August, 1818."

Joshua Featherston was the pastor of Williamsburg Circuit in 1819; there were 437 white and 50 colored members. Two Marriages performed in York County by Joshua Featherston are recorded,[29], "Wm Emory to Elizabeth A. Denbree May 18, 1819", and, "Smith Bunting to Nancy Topping, July 13, 1819." The latter is also recorded in York County Records,[30] together with the marriage of George Cox and Elizabeth Holloway both of York County; this marriage was performed by Frances A. Ward "M.M.E.C. a licensed Minister of the Gospel" (presumably the Presiding Elder).

The next year, 1820 George M. Anderson served the Williamsburg Circuit. The report of members was 473 white and 57 negro persons.

Frances A. Ward was minister of the Circuit in 1821, and a growth in membership was reported; 516 white, and 56 colored members were listed. He performed the marriage[29, 30] ceremony for John R. Fox to Catherine M. Moss, both of York County, December 31, 1821.

28. York County Orders Bk. No. 9; 1815-1820; P 308.
29. Va. Mag. of History & Biog. Vol. 25, page 300 "York County Marriages."
30. York County Guardians Accts. page IV.

CHAPTER IV

Deed for the Zion Methodist Church Property

The year 1822 saw the organizing of the *Zion Methodist Church* in Seaford, (called at that time, Crab Neck) in York County. The Rev. *Cyrus B. James*, who had settled in Poquoson in 1811, and had been prominent in the organizing of Tabernacle Methodist Church there in 1817, visited the Crab Neck area, coming by boat over the Poquoson River, and joined with the Methodists in establishing the Zion Church. A half acre of land[31] was given by "Thomas and Anna Stroud and William and Frances Stroud, to Joseph Crockett, James Ironmonger, Cyrus B. James, Robert Thompkins, Charles Ironmonger, William Guy and William Morgan, trustees, in trust . . . with boundaries marked . . . to them and their successors in office forever . . . that they shall erect and build there on, a house or place of worship for the use of the members of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the U.S.A. . . ." This indenture was made the 20th day of December, 1822. When the Rev. Cyrus B. James died some 43 years later, his obituary [32] was published in the Richmond Christian Advocate, in which was written: "He built the first Methodist Church that was ever in York County, and afterwards two others through his own instrumentality." Waddell Johnson was the pastor of Williamsburg Circuit in 1822 and there were 631 white and 47 colored members.

In 1823 Peyton Anderson was the Presiding Elder and Robert Wilkinson was in charge of the circuit, with 670 white and 30 negro members. In 1824 there were the same 6 Districts as formerly, and 79 preachers in the Virginia Conference.[33] The record and report of the Virginia Conference was listed consecutively this year, for the first time. John F. Andrew was sent to the Williamsburg Circuit, which had a membership of

31. York County Deed Book 9, page 344.
32. Obituary clipping from Richmond Christian Advocate 1865 and pasted in his daughter's Bible (Mrs. S. D. Ironmonger Sr.) now owned by Mrs. Allen Davis.
33. Minutes of the Annual Conferences Methodist Episcopal Church Vol. I., 1773-1828.

712 white and 53 negro persons. The same figures were reported in 1825, and two ministers were in charge of the circuit, John Kerr and Richard D. Merriwether.

In 1826 James Morrison was the minister for Williamsburg. The report showed 723 white and 32 colored members. There was a loss among the white members but a gain of 29 colored, in 1827; the figures were 672 white and 61 colored persons. Lewis Skidmore was Presiding Elder of James River District and Wm. W. M'Clun was the minister for Williamsburg.

The Presiding Elder for the year 1828 was Hezekiah G. Leigh. The church rolls of Williamsburg Circuit showed an increase of more than 225 members, indicating that a revival had taken place during the year. 893 white and 70 negro members were on the report. Christopher Thomas and Vernon Eskridge were the ministers for Williamsburg Circuit. 'Preacher Eskridge' must have been quite popular with the York County parishoners as several babies born around that time were evidently named for him. Succeeding generations of these same people have continued to name their offspring "Vernon Eskridge".

In 1829[34] William S. Peyton and Robert I. Carson served the 757 white and 42 negro members.

At the Annual Conference in 1830, it was recorded that "Christopher Thomas[35] of Mathews County had died 14 November 1829. He was on the Williamsburg Circuit in 1828 and was severely whipped by certain enemies he had made while discharging his duties. He was born October 31, 1797. S. Harroll and D. Wood were assigned to Williamsburg at that conference and the report gave 913 white and 41 colored members.

The circuit was assigned three ministers in 1831, George A. Bain, James A. Brown and William S. Peyton. The rolls carried 886 white and 39 colored persons.

Lewis Skidmore was Presiding Elder of the James River District in 1832 and Williamsburg Circuit had two ministers, Henry Alley and Benjamin Watson. The membership had reached a peak of 932 white and 42 colored members. The work

34. Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1829-1839, Volume II.
35. Ibid—page 75.

was divided at Conference and the lower section of the circuit was made Hampton Circuit. This was the first time that Hampton had been named a separate circuit.

The Rev. Henning W. Kelly was minister of the Gloucester Circuit at that time and a York County marriage performed by him was recorded.[36]

"Edward Bell to Harriett Wright January 25, 1832." The record stated that he was a Methodist Preacher. The marriage of William Kemp Charles to Martha Ann Hubbard on December 13, 1832 is listed in the same record. This ceremony was performed by Rev. Henry Alley, "M.E.", minister of Williamsburg Circuit.

In 1833 George Mahood served the 764 white and 42 colored members of Williamsburg Circuit. A letter from Colonial Williamsburg, Inc. gave the following information on Methodism in the town of Williamsburg, within the Williamsburg Circuit:[37]

"We do not know when the first Methodist Church in Williamsburg was erected. Prior to 1833 there was a Methodist chapel in the town."

In 1834 there were eight Districts in the Virginia Conference and the name of the James River District was changed back to Richmond District, as it had been prior to 1808. Williamsburg was assigned two ministers Jervis M. Keessee and John T. St. Clair and there were 702 white and 48 negro members.

Williamsburg and Hampton were given only one minister in 1835. He was J. P. Davidson. The membership was reported separately, as 682 and 166 whites, and 38 and one colored, respectively.

Williamsburg and Hampton had only one pastor for the years 1836, -37, -38, and -39 and the membership had declined greatly or else the reports were not complete. W. H. Kelly served in 1836; James W. Honeycutt in 1837; James D. Coulling in both 1838 and 1839. Reported Memberships were 258 - 7; 219 - 6; 272 - 5 and 239 - 10.

In Randolph Macon College Library, Ashland, Va., there are many copies of "The Virginia Conference Sentinel", published

36. Guardians Acct. Bk. York County, 1823-1846 P. 129.
37. A letter from Colonial Williamsburg, Inc., Mrs. R. W. Goodwin, June 8, 1955.

weekly for the Va. Annual Conference; Leroy M. Lee, Editor. The issue for Friday, March 18, 1836 carried the following: "Accounts have been made out and forwarded to" a list of 10 Reverends, including "Rev. Henning W. Kelly, by mail, for Williamsburg and Hampton Circuit, directed to Williamsburg, Va." Account for his circuit was _____ $83.30.

Jacob Manning[38] was on the Williamsburg[39] and Hampton Circuit in 1840, assisted by Reuben Jones. The membership was reported as 300 whites and 10 colored persons. In 1841 Jacob Manning and H. H. Garey[38] served the same group of 303 white and 10 colored persons.

According to a manuscript diary,[40] in 1841 a brick church was erected in the town of Williamsburg: "1841, July 11; they commenced building the new brick Methodist Church nearly opposite the courthouse, the funds were collected from all sects and denominations."

The time for the 1842 Conference was set for January 12, 1842. However it was called to order November 10, 1841. Williamsburg and Hampton presented a joint report of 340 white and 11 negro members, but they were given separate ministers. Joseph Lear was sent to Williamsburg.

When the Conference met November 16, 1842, James S. R. Clarke was assigned to Williamsburg.

38. Lafferty's "Sketches of Va. Conference"—1880—p. 29.
39. Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church —Volume III.
40. Diary in Galt Mms, on deposit, Colonial Williamsburg, Inc.

CHAPTER V

York-Warwick Circuit, 1843

As the membership of the Methodist Church grew throughout the Virginia Conference, more circuits were formed by dividing the larger ones. As has just been noted, Williamsburg and Hampton were divided in 1842. Williamsburg Circuit was again reduced in 1843. The minutes of the Conference for November 15, 1843 gives, for the first time, *York and Warwick Circuit* with James B. L. Williams their minister. They were on Richmond District.

The account of a strange occurrence concerning the Rev. Williams was published in the church papers[41] in November, 1844. "A religious discussion at the Brick Church in York County, called Grafton (Christian) between Rev. James B. L. Williams of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and the Rev. John Curtis of the Reformed Baptist Church, G. Lane Corbin, M.D. Moderator. On Tuesday morning, October 29th at 9 o'clock, to discuss some questions of difference between us, in relation to *faith, repentance* and *baptism* as constituting the Christian." The Rev. Curtis began the debate, was stricken ill, and died very suddenly. The Moderator wrote, "I found comfort in giving vent to a flood of tears, and here too I must refer to my Reverend Friend, Mr. Williams whose fine feelings were severely stung."

The Va. Conference met November 13, 1844 and York-Warwick Circuit reported 200 white and 10 colored members. Humphrey Billups was assigned to the charge.

In November 1845, "Benjamin F. Woodward[42] was sent in charge of the York and Warwich Circuit. This was a year of hard work and glorious results. A revival began in April, and continued to the close of the year."

The next record was taken from the Conference minutes of the Methodist Episcopal Church, *South.*[43]

41. Religious Herald, Nov. 14, 1844, p. 3; also in the Richmond Christian Advocate.
42. Lafferty's "Sketches", 1880—p 41.
43. Minutes of Conferences of M.E. Church, South; 1845-1858.

William Lee was sent to the York and Warwick Circuit in November 1846. There were 287 white and 15 colored members. The record stated that there were 166 local preachers in the Virginia Conference of the M. E. Church, South.

In 1847 York - Warwick and James City shared one minister, G. W. Andrews. Their membership reports were separate, York-Warwick having 287 white and 15 colored members.

The Conference met November 1 - 8, 1848 and the two circuits gave a combined report of 403 members. Each was assigned a minister, John S. Briggs being sent to York - Warwick. He was returned to the circuit in 1849. This is verified by a marriage record in York County;[44] "I hereby certify that by virtue of a license the rites of matrimony between John A. Skinner and Miss Fannie M. Smith of York County were duly solemized by me according to the rites and ceremonies of my church on Thursday the 22nd day of May, 1849. Signed, John S. Briggs, Minister of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. Recorded this 25 May 1849."

44. York County Guardian's Accts. 1823-1846 p. 409.

CHAPTER VI

Deed for the Providence M.E. Church, South, Property

In 1849 the Providence M. E. Church, South was built in Fish Neck (now Dare). With much local help a building 30 ft. long and 24 feet wide was erected, and made ready for religious services. Mr. A. B. Smith was the carpenter. The land on which it was built was given by the family of Mr. Edward Davis who moved from Mathews Co., Va. to Fish Neck, York Co., in 1846. The deed[45] states that it is for one acre of land, between Alexander Weston and Sarah F. Weston, his wife, and Mary Ann Davis to the following trustees: Thomas D. Hudgins, Samuel D. Ironmonger, Alexander Weston, James Wilson, John R. Chandler, Peter Shields and Whittington Crockett.

George W. Trimyer was the minister for York - Warwick Circuit in 1850 and also 1851. The membership was 294 - 22 in 1850 and 292 white and 28 colored in 1851.

There is recorded at Yorktown[46] the Court Order giving Rev. Trimyer the right to perform the marriage ceremony.

"George W. Trimyer, a minister of the Methodist Episcopal Church (South) having produced proof of his ordination and of his being in regular communion with the religious society of which he is reputed a member, ordered that he be authorized to celebrate the rights of matrimony according to the law, whereupon he appeared in Court and entered and acknowledged a bond in penalty of $1500.00, Mon. Jan. 20, 1851.

Soon after this, the following marriage was recorded:[47] "George W. Trimyer, a minister of the M.E. Church, South, and legally authorized by law, married on 8th of May, 1851 Miss Charlotte Thomas and Thomas Mason." He performed many more in his time.

The earliest Quarterly Conference Book for York and Warwick Circuit, that can be found, is dated 1852-1879. It is pre-

45. York County Deed Book 15, p. 55.
46. York County Orders Book, 1848-51 page 414.
47. Guardians Accts. York County 1823-1846; p. 410.

sumed that up to this time no records were kept by the local churches, except those made by the Pastors-in-charge, to the Annual Virginia Conference. When this area was on the Williamsburg Circuit from 1817 to 1843, most of the religious services were conducted by local preachers and laymen, because the circuit as a whole, covered such a large territory, the pastor in charge could meet with each Church, or Society, only occasionally, as he made his "rounds" on the Circuit. Thus statistics of number of members and names of ministers were recorded each year in the Annual Conference Minutes, even though local records were not kept.

When York and Warwick became a Circuit in 1843 it embraced quite a large territory, and while there were services conducted more often by the pastor in charge than formerly, formal records still seem to have been omitted until 1852.

Rev. George Trimyer married Miss Rosanna Davis, daughter of the late Edward Davis and Mrs. Amelia Davis of York County and they made their home in Cockle Town. The name of the community was later changed to Grafton. Rev. Trimyer served the York - Warwick Circuit two years until the Fall of 1852, and it was under his ministry that the above mentioned Quarterly Conference Record Book was begun. Quarterly Conference dates were recorded as February 7, 1852; April 15; August 23, September 29, 1852, and a called meeting October 1, 1852.

This record book, together with the first Church-roll book through 1860, has been copied by Mrs. Elizabeth Hogg Ironmonger (Mrs. J. W.), and typed copies are in possession of each of the four churches of York Charge. The original two books are in the Archives Room of the Virginia Methodist Conference, in Randolph-Macon College Library, Ashland, Virginia.

The next Section, Part II is based on the first recorded Quarterly Conference Minutes and Roll Book of York - Warwick Circuit; 1852-1879.

PART II

CHAPTER I

From 1852 to 1862[48]

At the first Quarterly Conference for York and Warwick Circuit held February 7, 1852 at Tabernacle Church, the report[48a] of the delegates to the District Stewards meeting was presented, in which it was stated that the Circuit assessment for the Presiding Elder's salary was set at $55, and Conference Collection $50. The group set the Pastor's salary at $113.40 for the year, thus making the amount "necessary to defray the expenses of the Circuit for the year," $168.40. It was apportioned among the three churches, according to their membership: Tabernacle $75, Zion $62, and Providence $31.40. These figures are recorded here to show the humble beginnings of the early church.

It was resolved that "Brother Trimyer (the preacher-in-charge) be made the Agent to form Missionary Societies wherever Practicable." There is no record of such societies being formed for a number of years.

There were three Sabbath Schools in successful operation in 1852 with 104 students, three superintendents, three assistants and 18 teachers. These operated in the Spring and Summer months only. The report[49] February 5, 1853 said, "There are no Sabbath Schools in operation on the circuit during the winter which the Pastor regrets, and wishes that circumstances were such as to allow them to be attended during the winter, but the 'lowness' of the land and the rainy season seem to render it impracticable. The three Sabbath Schools on the circuit will commence their operations as soon as the Spring opens. He feels great concern for the rising generation and trusts that these schools may greatly benefit the young."

Other business before the Conference was a motion[50] that "Brother Robinson (pastor-in-charge 1853), Brother Chandler and Brother Nottingham are appointed a committee to try to

48. Quarterly Conference Minutes for York Warwick Circuit.
48a. Ibid P. 49.
49. Ibid P. 55.
50. Ibid p. 55.

collect the money due on subscription toward paying for Providence Church, and report to the next Quarterly meeting."

At the Conference June 25, 1853 it was reported that three Sabbath Schools were in flourishing condition.

Cyrus B. James, Local Elder, John W. Shields, Local Preacher, and Hind Holloway, Exhorter, were examined as to character, and their licenses were renewed.

At the Second Quarterly Conference, the Rev. William A. Robinson was released from the committee to collect money for Providence Church, and Kemp Charles was appointed instead.

At the August 6 Conference, the same year, the pastor-in-charge told of obstacles in the way of the Sunday Schools. He said,[51] "The same Sabbath Schools are in operation this quarter as was last. He is sorry, however, to be compelled to say there is a declension in all of them owing to circumstances which are beyond the control of him or the superintendents. The rain which has been so constant and heavy for the last four weeks makes the ways so wet, and so many ticks, have operated very much against our Sunday Schools, causing them to be thinly attended, both by teachers and pupils." Then, in December he reported that the schools were suspended for the winter but would be resumed when the Spring opened.

At the Quarterly Conference held July 29, 1854, the following interesting report was made[52], "a report from Centenary Station relative to the property of the Parsonage, belonging to the Richmond District was adopted."

On September 16, (same year)[53] "The Presiding Elder in accordance with the plan adopted by the last Quarterly Conference, nominated, and the Conference confirmed the appointment of the following persons as trustees to hold the legal title to the Richmond District Parsonage furniture, Thos. H. Lambeth, Isaac C. Austin and Charles Talbot, of Richmond, Va.; John I. Clark of Charles City County; Warner Enos, of James City County; John R. Chandler of York County; Wm. M. Brownley of Mathews County; Jefferson W. Stubbs, of Gloucester County, and Robert A. Armistead of Hampton.

51. Ibid p. 60.
52. Ibid, page 64.
53. Ibid, page 66.

About this time, it became necessary to build the second Tabernacle Church and "the[54] Conference appointed Arthur B. White, Edward Hopkins, William Freeman, Thomas Dixon and Thomas C. Emory a Building Committee to superintend and have erected a House of Worship for the Tabernacle Congregation of this circuit." September 16, 1854.

At the Annual Virginia Conference in the Fall of 1854 York and Warwick Circuit was divided and the reports from that time, were listed as "York Circuit".

In March, 1855 the Board of Trustees for Tabernacle was enlarged, and the change was recorded at the Circuit Court for York County:[55]

" . . . On behalf of the authorized authorities of the religious congregation which worship in the Church commonly called and known as the Tabernacle Church, situate in the County of York and attached to the Methodist Episcopal Church South, the Court doth appoint Thomas Dixon, William Freeman, Arthur B. White, Edward Hopkins, William Lawson, Thomas Amory, Josiah Evans, Henry Watkins and William Page, Trustees to take and hold the said Tabernacle Church and the lot of land on which the same is located, containing . . . two acres . . . , adjoining the public road . . . , and the lands of Daniel Carmines (which said lot . . . was heretofore conveyed to Trustees . . . for the use . . . of said congregation, as and for a place of Public Worship), and nearly all of the Trustees are dead."

The Second Quarterly Conference for 1855 was held April 21, "at Yorktown in the Episcopal Church."[56] In the financial report $38.50 for the Quarter was listed, and 'Yorktown' gave $9.00 of this amount. This points to the probability of there being a small Society in Yorktown, but not a Methodist Church. The next Conference which met at Providence July 14, 1855 told of four Sunday Schools in operation. A committee composed of James P. Selby, N. R. Eagle and John J. Palmtary was appointed to select a place in Yorktown or vicinity to erect a church and report as soon as possible.

The first Quarterly Conference for 1856 was held at Zion February 2, when Samuel M. Hammond, presumably of Yorktown was examined and his license as Exhorter was renewed.

54. Ibid, page 67.
55. York County, Va. Orders Book No. 2. page 242.
56. Quarterly Conference Minutes 1852-79—page 70.

The expenses for the year were set at $244. and was approtioned as follows:[57]

Tabernacle Church $100.; Zion $85.; Providence $40.; and Yorktown $25.

At the final Conference the previous year "the present building committee of Tabernacle was invested with authority to sell the old church." It is assumed that the new building had been completed by this time.

In 1856, Samuel M. Hammond applied for Local Preacher's license, and his request was granted. He thus moved up from Exhorter to Local Preacher.

Plans were begun to consider the propriety of holding a Camp Meeting. The committee was made up of "Edwin Hammond for Piney Grove, (this seems to have been the name of the Yorktown group) James P. Selby, the same; Peter Shield and Whittington Crockett for Zion; John R. Chandler and Arthur B. White for Providence; Thomas Emory, Edward Hopkins and William Page for Tabernacle."

York Circuit had been a part of Richmond District since 1801, while it was a section of Williamsburg. It remained in the same association when the name of the district was changed to James River District in 1809, and was still a part of the district when in 1834 the James River District was re-named "Richmond." When York was cut off from Williamsburg in 1843, both circuits were on the Richmond District. It is worthy of note, above, that one of the trustees of the Richmond District parsonage in 1854 was of York County. Then, in 1855 the Virginia Conference changed the bounds of some of the districts and York, Hampton, Gloucester and Mathews were transferred to Norfolk District.[58]. It seems this was not a satisfactory arrangement, for in 1857 the Conference returned these circuits to Richmond District.

The third Quarterly Meeting for 1856 was held July 12, at "Piney Grove Church" and two contributions from that group were recorded, that of $9.00 on the financial report of the stewards, (Zion, $5.75; Providence $10.50; Tabernacle $6.00) and "Paid to the Presiding Elder $15.30 from Piney Grove."[59]

57. Ibid, page 74.
58. Minutes of Va. Conference M.E. Church, South, 1845-1858.
59. Quarterly Conference Minutes for York, 1852-1879, page 76.

The reason for this contribution to the Presiding Elder is a little obscure as the Conference paid him $11.25 out of the amount collected by the stewards.

At the close of the year (1856) the trustees of the three churches gave an account of the church property on York Circuit. They said,[60] "We, the trustees of Tabernacle Church met according to appointment and make the following report, to wit—That Tabernacle Church is in good order and has a full board of trustees, and that there is a debt of one hundred and twelve dollars, of which sum, we have the amount of fifty dollars subscribed, yet to be collected, all of which we respectfully submit; October 6, 1856". The trustees were those confirmed by York Court in 1855, except Elisha Lawson had been elected to fill the place of Thomas Dixon, and John Montgomery took the place of Arthur B. White.

"At[61] a meeting of the Trustees of Providence Church of the M. E. Church, South, Va. Conference, York Circuit, present; John R. Chandler, Samuel D. Ironmonger, and Alexander Weston; Thomas D. Hudgins being absent; the Preacher-in-charge nominated Arthur B. White to fill the place of James Wilson Junr. who withdrew. Bro. White was elected. Bro. Robert Wilson was then nominated and elected to fill the place of Bro. Whittington Crockett. Bro. Curtis Messick was then nominated and elected to fill the place of Bro. Peter Shield. James S. Wilson and James R. Walter were also elected.

We the trustees of Providence Church make the following report: The house is new and in good repair, with some little exceptions which we will attend to. There is a debt of thirty-five dollars against the church, and thirteen dollars subscribed, not collected.

(Signed) John R. Chandler
Alexander Weston
Samuel D. Ironmonger—Trustees"

October 22, 1856

"Trustees Record for Zion[62]

At a meeting of the trustees of Zion Church, York Circuit, Va. Conference M. E. South, held October 23, 1856, the follow-

60. Ibid P. 79.
61. Ibid Page 80.
62. Ibid page 81.

ing are the remaining trustees – Whittington Crockett, Peter Shield, Cary W. Crockett, John T. Crockett, William R. Tignor.

Nominated and elected, Cyrus W. James, Thomas Dawson, John W. Shield, and Benjamin Wright, – the above elections to fill the vacancies in the Board, making the number of nine Trustees.

We the Trustees make the following report, to wit: That the house is in tolerable good order and clear of debt, all of which we respectfully submit.

(Signed) Whittington Crockett
Peter Shield
Cary W. Crockett–Trustees."

There was no report of a board of trustees or, of a church building for Yorktown or "Piney Grove" which indicates the group there was only a small society and not an organized church. However, at the Second Quarterly Conference of 1857 they contributed $16.87½.

At this conference a committee was appointed "to[63] ascertain how many persons will promise to have tents in the event of a camp meeting being held on the circuit."

The Sunday School reports showed a fluctuation with the seasons and the weather. One school was in operation in May, 1857, and at the next Quarterly Conference in August the Preacher-in-charge was able to report: "The[64] past quarter has been one of growing interest as regards the Sabbath Schools' operations. We now have three Sabbath Schools in a flourishing condition and well attended to. During the past Quarter the Preacher-in-charge has sought to impress upon the minds of the people of his charge the duty of dedicating their children to God in Holy Baptism and has been successful. He would also state as the P.C., that he has sought to recommend our church publications to all, and particularly those who are Heads of families, for the good of their children."

Then, by October, two of the schools had closed for the season, and the third one closed before the winter weather set in.

63. Ibid page 84.
64. Ibid page 85.

Plans for a camp meeting progressed in 1858. At the Conference in May the Committee said:[65] "The Camp Meeting Committee reports favorably for a camp meeting, provided a sufficient number of tents can be obtained, and recommend that some day between the 1st and 10th of August, the most convenient." When the May Conference came to a close, the official Board decided to have the next Quarterly Conference "at the Camp Ground."

It was[66] August 17, 1858 when the third Quarterly Conference was called and the record states that it was "held for York Circuit on the Camp Ground in York County." There is nothing in the record to indicate the location of the camp. It is probable that the camp meeting started about August 10th, as they usually ran about a week. The Presiding Elder, Rev. D. S. Doggett was present, and James E. Joiner, Preacher-in-charge. Local preachers and exhorters also took part, no doubt, in the religious services from day to day, for several were present at the Quarterly Meeting on the 17th, which points to their attendance throughout the camp meeting.

Rev. Cyrus B. ~~Jones~~ James, Local Elder, 72 years old at that time, one of the founders of the three Methodist Churches that made up York Circuit was among them. Rev. George W. Trimyer, Local Elder, who had married a York County girl and had established their home near Providence Church; he too was present. He had been preacher-in-charge in 1850-51 and 51-52, and was again the pastor a few years later. Rev. John W. Shield, Local deacon, 45 years old, was one of the group, also Wm. H. Mitchell, a local preacher.

Cary James, Hind Holloway and William A. Nothingham, Exhorters, were also present and lent their assistance to the success of the meetings.

The men who preached, prayed, sang and exhorted at Camp meeting were no ordinary preachers. They were outstanding men of their day, and many souls were converted under the power of their services.

The women, too, made a great contribution to the success of the meetings as they "sang the songs of Zion," prayed, and

65. Ibid page 89.
66. Ibid page 90.

sometimes shouted during services; and then they were resourceful housekeepers and cooks away from home, as they prepared the delicious meals, over the coals of their out-door fires.

At the end of the year the Preacher "[67]reported 38 persons received into the churches on Probation and one by certificate. At the beginning[68] of 1858, the membership of the circuit had been 283 on roll, 55 probationers, white; and 27 negro members. Thus the results of the Camp Meeting added 38 members making a total of more than 375.

Nothing more was in the records regarding the small society at Yorktown, until 1870.

The three organized churches, Tabernacle, Zion, and Providence had regular preaching services through 1859-1860 and 1861 according to plan. When the Preacher in charge was occupied at one church, services at the others were conducted by local preachers and laymen.

The Quarterly Conferences were held regularly and records of the meetings were faithfully kept. The place of meeting alternated among the three churches from time to time.

The financial obligations, though small, were met, regularly. At the first[69] Quarterly Conference in 1861, February 23, "the Circuit Stewards made the following report for the expenses of the circuit for the present year: $708.60" and assessed each of the three churches. Compared with the figures of $168.40 in 1852, this showed a growth in finances, and indicates a growth in membership.

The reports of the Sunday Schools still showed the results of weather conditions and they were underscored by the concern of the Preachers in charge. In February 1859 Rev. William A. Robinson said:[70] "I am sorry that facts constrain me to report, Brethren, that there are no Sabbath Schools in operation, on the circuit; whereas in my opinion there should be three in successful operation all through the entire year. The dense population of this county obviates all the difficulties which sparcely populated places might plead in defense of discontinuing Sabbath Schools during the winter season: indeed the multiplicity of people

67. Ibid page 91.
68. Minutes of Virginia Conference, M.E. Church, South, 1845-1858.
69. Quarterly Conference Minutes for York Circuit 1852-1879. P 107.
70. Ibid page 93.

crowded into neighborhoods, and numerous quantity of children growing out of this fact, call loudly for Sabbath Schools to be continued during the entire year, because, unless children be employed usefully on the Sabbath, they will be engaged in wicked and unlawful employments, especially when they are so numerous. I would therefore suggest that we, as a Quarterly Conference enter into a resolution to commence our Sabbath Schools immediately, say on the first Sabbath in the month of March and that henceforth we endeavor to continue them during the winter. This I insist upon because, during this season you have nothing but the weather to interfere with you, whereas during the summer months, both the hot weather and the protracted meetings to contend against. All of which I respectfully submit."

On July 23, 1859 Rev. Robinson said, in part: [71]"There are three Sabbath Schools in operation and they are all doing good . . . interest is spreading among the people; in this he rejoices and hopes it may continue to spread until the whole lump is leavened. . . . Bro. Giddings at Zion is doing well under the circumstances. The affliction of his family and other obstacles hinder him, yet the school which he superintends is growing in interest. Bro. Arthur B. White, the superintendent at Providence deserves high commendations. The school under his supervision is gaining in numbers, knowledge and piety. The school at Tabernacle under the superintendence of Bro. John F. White excells the others. It is much larger than both the other schools, ... The schools at Zion and Providence are both very deficient in Books. The library at Tabernacle has recently been recruited with a lot of books which cost $8.50."

His report at the end of the year showed that the schools closed again, for the winter. He expressed the wish that the "Brethren would attend to *these nurseries of the church* and thus transmit Methodism to descending generations." Later reports told of the School being discontinued "on account of the present troubles," (Oct. 30, 1861). The 'trouble' he referred to was the beginning of the Civil War.

At the Conference, held October 13, 1859 there was a report of 65 persons added to the Church rolls, "on probation." "The

71. Ibid—page 96.
72. Ibid page 98.

Chairman[72] "then called for the trustees' report. There was no report from Tabernacle. Zion and Providence reported their respective boards full and satisfied by the Judge of the Circuit Court."

The following year they stated:[73] "Tabernacle Church is in good condition, out of debt and a full board of Trustees. Zion is in bad condition and a full board of trustees." Providence trustees did not report.

The final report on the condition of the Church buildings, before the Civil War, was made at the fourth Quarterly Conference held at Zion October 30, 1861. It read:[74] "The Trustees of Zion beg leave to report that their church is out of debt, but in bad condition. The trustees of Providence beg leave to report that their church is out of debt and in good condition. No trustees from Tabernacle, hence no report."

The Preacher in charge also said that "in his judgment the state of religion on the circuit is rather declining, oweing principally to the present War."

There had been a parsonage committee appointed and they had reported twice, but the development of the war situation cancelled any further plans of building a parsonage at that time. Rev. B. T. Ames, who came to the circuit in the Fall of 1860 stayed about half of the year. He conducted the first and second Quarterly Conferences and left. There was no third conference. Rev. Geo. W. Trimyer finished out the year's work.

Presiding Elders[75] for York Circuit during the years 1852 through 1861 were Rev. Jacob Manning, two years; Rev. Thomas C. Hayes, one year; Rev. Leonidas Rosser, two years; Rev. Thomas C. Hayes, another one year period; and Rev. D. S. Doggett, four years.

Preachers-in-charge on York Circuit were:

George W. Trimyer, 1850-51; 1851-52; William A. Robinson, 1852-53; 1853-54; David H. Laney, 1854-55; Humphrey Billups, 1855-1856; Alexander M. Hall, 1856-57; James E. Joiner, 1857-58; William A. Robinson, 1858-59; A. M. Hall, 1859-60; Benj. T. Ames, 1860-61; Rev. Geo. W. Trimyer, 1861.

73. Ibid P. 105.
74. Ibid, page 110.
75. Ibid pp 1 to 110; Minutes of Va. Conference M.E. Church, South, 1845-1858; Minutes of Va. Conference Vol 2–1858-1865.

CHAPTER II

From 1866 to 1880

When the fourth Quarterly Conference for York Circuit was held October 30, 1861, there came to a close the regular Methodist services in the York County Churches, and Quarterly Conferences were supended. A blank page in the old York-Warwick Conference Minute book (1852-1879) gave mute testimony to that fact. Most of the men were away from their homes, enduring the hardships of the Civil War.

A few years ago the following order[76] was found in an old desk in the Ironmonger family: "Headquarters 4th Corps. Yorktown, Va., Nov. 5/1862.

No person belonging to this command shall, under any pretext, destroy or disfigure in any way the church known as Providence Church, in Fish Neck, in the Co. of York, or remove any property belonging to the same."

(Signed) "E. D. Keyes, Major Gen. Commanding the 4th Corps."

The Tabernacle Church also was unharmed, but the Zion Church, in Crab Neck, York County, was destroyed by the Northern Army.

The report[77] of the Richmond District at the Virginia Annual Conference in 1864 said:

"Peninsula Mission, no report, Va. Conference, 1864."

Also, a big Volume[78] with fourteen years' minutes said: "1863; 1864; 1865, York sent no report."

When the Rev. John W. Shields (local deacon) died some years later, it was written of him that,[79] "during the last three years of the War, he was the only Southern minister on the Peninsula, below Williamsburg, where he rendered good service, as far as he had permission to do."

76. Photostatic Copy in possession of the author.
77. Minutes of the Annual Conference of the M.E. Church, South, Vol. 2; 1858-1865.
78. Minutes of Annual Conference M.E. Church S., 1855-1869.
79. Obituary Clipping, 1873; Pasted in Old Conference Minutes.

In 1865 Rev. Robert Nelson Crooks, soldier, pioneer preacher in mountain lands, chaplain, from Greenup County, Kentucky, was sent by the Rev. J. D. Coulling, Presiding Elder of Richmond District, to the Peninsula to look after the "scattered and returning Methodists." He wrote the following[80]: "I . . . was assigned to duty at Chimborago Hospital, Richmond, Va., as a chaplain, in June 1862, where I remained until the close of the war, May, 1865. At the close of the war I was unable to return to the west. The Rev. J. D. Coulling sent me to the Peninsula. . . . I gathered together the churches in Henrico, Charles City, and a part of New Kent, to which I preached until Conference in Danville, November, 1865, at which time I was transferred from the West Virginia Conference to the Virginia Conference. From this Conference I was sent to *York and Hampton* and served three years. Later I was returned to York, after Hampton and Fox Hill had been formed into a charge to themselves."

The first Quarterly Conference[81] for York Circuit Virginia M.E. Church, South after the Civil War, met at Tabernacle Church, York County, Va., March 17, 1866. It was called to order by Rev. R. N. Crooks, "Elder in Charge" in the absence of the Presiding Elder.

Those present were Rev. R. N. Crooks, Rev. John W. Shield, Local Deacon, and the following class leaders; John T. Montgomery, William Page, Alex Weston, Robert W. Crockett, John F. White. Stewards present were Edward Hopkins, Thomas C. Amory, John R. Chandler and Whittington Crockett.

There was no Sunday School report. There were three items of new business. First, the election of stewards. The four, above, were reelected and the names of Levi T. Moore, Thomas D. Hudgins and Samuel D. Ironmonger were added to the body of stewards.

The second item was, "measures toward building a church for the Zion congregation. On motion of Bro. John R. Chandler (of Providence) there was a committee of five appointed to take action toward building a church for the Zion and Providence churches on the stage road, near Cockle Town."

"On motion of Bro. Whittington Crockett (of Zion) there was a committee of five appointed *from Zion*, viz. Bros. Cary W.

80. Lafferty, "Sketches Va. Conference," 1880, p. 97.
81. Quarterly Conference Minutes for York 1852-1879–p. 112.

Crockett, Cyrus W. James, S. D. Ironmonger, John F. White and Fred P. Crockett, to take measures towards building a church in Crab Neck, provided the first committee fails in erecting the church specified in first resolution."

The third item of business was the steward's report. They set the preacher's salary, as follows:

Preacher's claim for self, 150.00
Preacher's claim for wife, 150.00
Preacher's claim for child, 25.00
Preacher's traveling expenses 15.00, a total of $340.00

Presiding Elder's claims were unknown. These claims were divided among the three churches, Tabernacle $140, Providence $100, and Zion $100, the P. E. Claims to be divided in the same ratio. "Our Preacher's board is provided for, among the membership." Thus the Pastor and his family moved once a month from the home of a family of members, to another family group. This plan was in effect a year or more.

At the second Quarterly Conference held at Providence Church, June 23, 1866 the Presiding Elder, Dr. Leo Rosser was present and sixteen members of the Official Board.

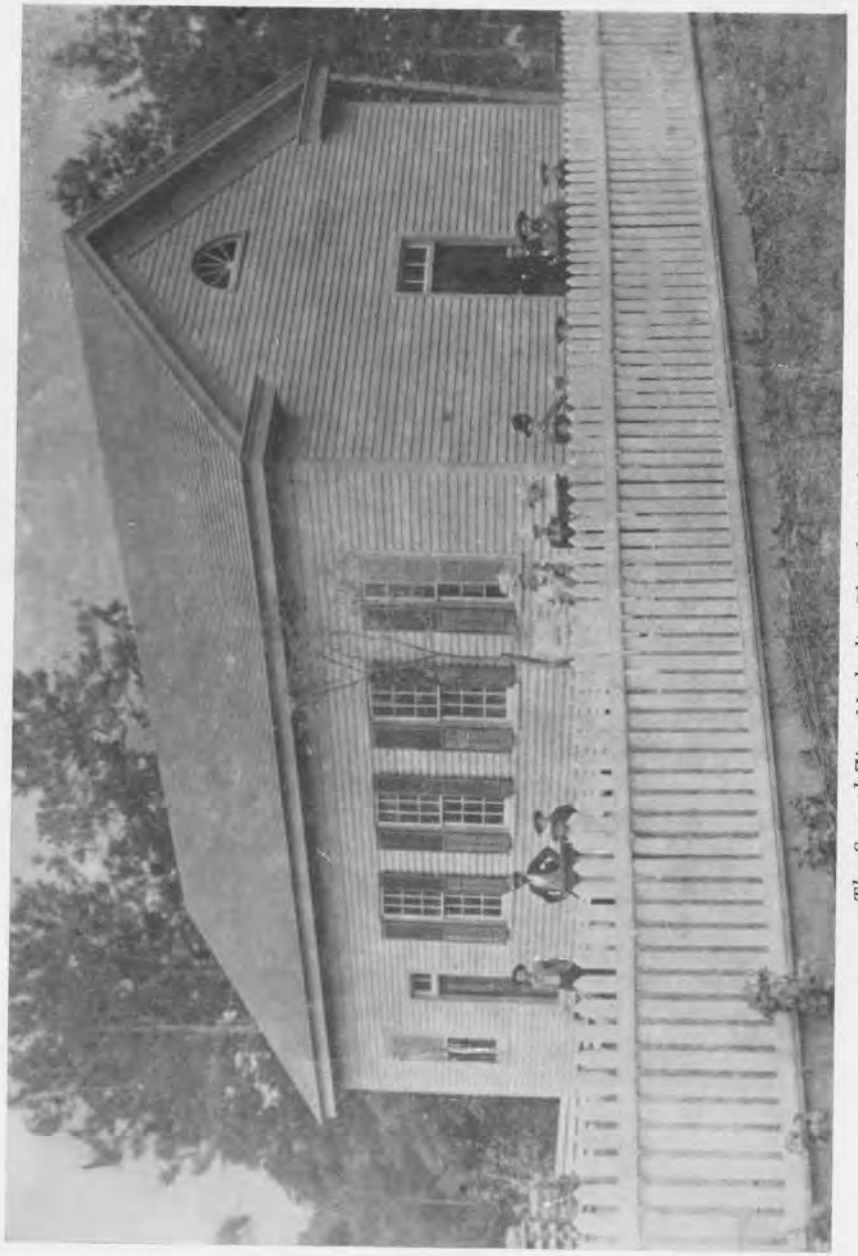
The three churches reported a Sunday School in each, with a combined membership of 213. In the financial report, it was noted that Fox Hill had been added to York Circuit report.

Eighty members had been received into the churches, during the quarter. In September, at the third conference the report said:[82] "About one hundred have professed religion, eighty-seven have been received into church membership during the past quarter."

On Sept. 8, 1866 a committee of five was appointed to consider the enlargement of Providence Church house, and two more were added to the committee to erect Zion Church house, Bros. John W. Shield and William Montgomery.

The fourth Quarterly Conference met at Zion, November 10, 1866. This record proved the time of the rebuilding of Zion Church. At the first Conference March 17, the committee to build Zion was appointed, and at the fourth Conference, Nov. 10, the Board met *in Zion Church*. The lumber used in the con-

82. Ibid, P. 116.



The Second Zion Methodist Church. Built in 1866.

struction of this second Zion Church building was brought from Old Point by Samuel D. Ironmonger on his boat. It was salvaged material from a dismantled Barracks Building of the Northern Army.

They reported three Sunday Schools in growing condition, and a church membership roll of 414.

At the Annual Conference[83] in the Fall of 1866 the report was: "York 513 members." The difference of 99 members in the two reports is accounted for by Fox Hill, as the 414 members belonged to Zion, Providence and Tabernacle Churches.

When the Annual Virginia Conference met in the Fall of 1866, the Rev. R. N. Crooks was returned to York Circuit. In addition to his work with the three churches of York Circuit, he was called upon to assist in the rehabilitation of the town of Hampton, which had suffered severe losses in the Civil War.

It has been stated that[84] "in 1830 the population of Hampton was 1120. It contained at that time about 130 dwelling houses, two Baptist Churches, one Methodist and one Episcopal Church, one Academy and one private school, etc. . . . In 1860 the population was 1848, of whom 782 were negro slaves, 73 were free negroes and 993 were white people."

"In the war for Southern Independence (Civil War) the people of Hampton were warmly *for* the Confederate cause, but their close proximity to the most powerful fort of the United States rendered their position a most unhappy one. Nearly all the families abandoned the town and in August 1862 the place was fired by order of General Magruder . . . In the general conflagration the (Episcopal) Church also was consumed, with the exception of the massive walls which remained standing. (It is presumed the Methodist Church was burned, too.) Only five houses were left, and the citizens, by thus yielding to the flames, property worth $200,000, demonstrated their intensive devotion to the cause they had espoused."

"In 1865, when the war ended the old Hampton families flocked back to the ruins of their once beautiful homes."

The first Quarterly Conference[85] for York Circuit in 1867 met at Tabernacle Church, Feb. 23. The church budget was in-

83. Minutes of Annual Conferences M.E. Church South, 1855-1869—P. 8.
84. Dr. Lyon G. Tyler's, *History of Hampton*, pp. 51; 52; 53.
85. Quarterly Conference Minutes for York 1852-1879—P. 118.

creased from $340.00 (last year's figures) to $835 and the assessments were recorded as follows: Tabernacle $295.; Zion $210.; Providence $210.; Hampton and Fox Hill $120. It is of interest that the item of "Parsonage Furniture, $70.00" was included in budget.

Before the second Quarterly Conference convened, an up-to-date Board of Trustees for all three churches was selected and the matter was referred to the York Circuit Court.[85a]

A special session of Court was called by Judge Joseph Christian "to convene on Wednesday the fifth of June next, no Grand Jury, but a venire of jurors for the trial of causes. . . ."

"Present: The Hon. Joseph Christian, Judge of said Court. Thursday, June the 7th, 1867.

On the motion of the proper authorities of the congregations of Providence, Zion and Tabernacle Methodist Churches, South, the following trustees are appointed by the Court: John F. White in the place of Arthur B. White, deceased; Robert W. Crockett in the place of Curtis Messick, removed, and Kemp Charles in the place of Samuel D. Ironmonger, removed, for Providence Church; Frederick P. Crockett in the place of Peter Shield, deceased; William Montgomery in the place of Benjamin Wright, deceased; and Samuel D. Ironmonger in the place of Cyrus W. James, deceased, for Zion Church; and Parker Topping in the place of William Lawson, deceased, for Tabernacle Church.

The said trustees are hereby invested with the same rights and are to hold and enjoy the property of the respective churches aforesaid in the same manner as their predecessors."

Leaders of the circuit had accomplished much in one year—a new church building at Zion, plans to enlarge Providence; large gain in membership; full Boards of Stewards and good gain in the financial program.

The Second Quarterly Conference[86] "for York Circuit" met at Fox Hill June 29, 1867. "The pastors report gave four Sabbath Schools, with 46 officers and teachers and 150 scholars." His report on the general state of the church said: "number of churches 5; sermons preached, 24; families visited 134; deaths 2; withdrawals 2; number of memberships, (white) 504; colored,

85a. York County, Va. Chancery Orders, 1866-1876—P. 24.
86. Ibid p. 120.

one; children baptized 18; received by certificate, one; dismissed, two."

Zion was the host church for the third conference, and the fourth was held at Providence November 6, 1867. Fox Hill, Zion, Tabernacle and Providence were listed as contributing to the support of the church.

There continued to be an association of the York Circuit and the Hampton - Fox Hill Churches until 1870, according to the Quarterly Conference Minutes. However, in 1867 Rev. William Andrew Crocker was also engaged in reorganizing the work in Hampton. He said:[87] "I undertook to restore the walls of Israel in the ruined town of Hampton, where there was at that time no minister either in the Counties of Elizabeth City, or Warwick. One hundred dollars was all that could be raised. There was no parsonage. God blessed the effort to rebuild the waste place. In 1867, eighty were converted."

The first Quarterly Conference[88] "for York Circuit and Hampton Mission" met at Zion Church February 29, 1868. The reports were encouraging, and "the general state of the church was reasonably good." They chose "Hampton, Elizabeth City County, for the next meeting, which took place May 2, 1868.

They seemed to make a point of keeping the records in such a way as to show two circuits meeting together, and not as one large circuit. For instance[89] they listed the Rev. R. N. Crooks as "Preacher in charge of *York Circuit;*" and "Edw. Hopkins, Wm. Page, L. P. Moore, Parker Topping, W. H. White, T. C. Amory, Wilton Wilson, Elias Holloway, members present from York Circuit; Willis Wilson, John Clark and John Bloxom." Report of Sunday Schools read: "From York Circuit: The Preacher in Charge of York Circuit begs leave to report to you, 4 Sunday Schools in operation, one a new school organized at the Sons of Temperance Hall in Poquoson, etc". This was the fore-runner of the fourth church (Trinity) of York.

Under Missions report, it was stated that "the churches in York Circuit have organized a corps of young ladies in each church to solicit missionary money, which to every appearance is doing well."

87. Lafferty's, *Sketches of Va. Conference*, 1880; p. 39.
88. Quarterly Conference Minutes for York Circuit 1852-1879; P. 126.
89. Ibid, p. 127.

To each question asked the record stated, "The Preacher in charge of York Circuit reports . . ."; "The stewards of York Circuit report amount raised . . .", etc. There was one item of business that concerned Hampton. "The Conference[90] passed the following order in reference to the lot in Hampton which Mr. Thompson's heirs holds a Deed of Trust for: 'It is ordered, by the conference that all matters pertaining to the Thompkins lot be referred to the living members of the Board of Trustees, with full authority, should they deem it proper and just, to return the said lot to the Thompkins heirs.' ."

The Presiding Elder was absent when the third Ouarterly Conference met at Tabernacle Church, August 22, 1868. Bro. Edward Hopkins was granted a license to preach (local preacher); and the financial report came from Tabernacle, Zion and Providence, with no mention made of Fox Hill or Hampton. This meeting was held by Rev. R. N. Crooks, preacher in charge.

On October 24, 1868 the fourth Quarterly Conference met at Providence Church. Again the Presiding Elder was absent and the Preacher in charge presided: In the report on state or condition of the Sunday School the pastor said:[91] "Brethren, your Pastor . . . reports that there are four schools on the circuit, which were in a favorable condition until the sickly season began, but since, the schools have been thinly attended, on account of chills and fevers. There are about 50 officers and teachers, and 200 scholars. There are about 500 volumes of all kinds in the libraries. 30 Sunday School visitors." "Bro. John F. White was recommended by the leaders of Zion Church as a suitable person to exhort, which was granted to him."

In reply to the question regarding Missions, it was stated that $30. had been contributed; $22. for the benevolent enterprises of the church; $10. for Bishop's fund and $5. for deficient preachers. Two trustees were elected; for Zion, John R. Dillard in the place of Wesley James, dec'd, and Kemp Charles for Providence, in the place of J. R. Walter.

When the appointments were read at the Virginia Conference in the Fall of 1868 the Rev. J. D. Lumsden was sent to York Circuit. Hampton and York were transferred from the Richmond District to Norfolk District. The membership of the Circuit was 486.

90. Ibid, p. 127.
91. Ibid, page 130.

The District Stewards[92] met in Norfolk, December 18, 1868. Edward Hopkins and John R. Chandler, York delegates attended, and upon their return they gave a report, at a meeting of the York Circuit Stewards, January 24, 1869 at Providence Church. They set up the financial program of the year, setting the "support of the preacher," $600, for the Conference year; his traveling expenses, $25; Presiding Elder's allowance $40, making a total of $665. This was apportioned among the churches as follows: Tabernacle, $275; Providence, $125; Zion, $150; Hampton and Fox Hill, $115.

The stewards presented a list of articles to furnish the parsonage. Presumably a house was rented to be used as a parsonage, probably in Hampton. They estimated the cost of the necessary articles of house-keeping at $150 and "apportioned to each church the following amounts to pay for same": Tabernacle $70., Zion, $34., Providence, $25., Hampton and Fox Hill, $21.

At the first Quarterly Conference[93] for the year 1868-69, held March 6 at Tabernacle it was reported that they had "Raised $150 to purchase furniture for a parsonage for the circuit and expended accordingly." The Presiding Elder was Rev. D. P. Wills. For[94] four year, 1867-68-69-70 he was Presiding Elder of Norfolk District, and it was said of him that he "had been the right hand of the Bishops for years."

George M. Peek and G. Tennille were elected stewards for Hampton; and G. M. Peek, T. W. Watts, E. J. Richardson, Sylvester Kelley and G. F. Tennille, trustees of the church property in Hampton. The Presiding Elder presented the assessment plan of the District recommendation to the several churches for their adoption, which was agreed to by the conference, and the following resolutions were adopted:

That the missionary cause is eminently deserving the sympathies, prayers and contributions of every good citizen, and especially of every Christian.

2nd, that every member of the church on this circuit should contribute at least twenty-five cents this year for this cause.

3rd – That our pastor be, and he is hereby required to divide all the members of the different churches on the circuit

92. Ibid, p. 132.
93. Ibid, page 133.
94. Lafferty's *Sketches of Va. Conference,* 1880; page 55.

into classes and appoint a collector for each to receive from anyone the above sum.

They planned to hold the next meeting at Hampton. The record showed that the second Quarterly Conference[95] in 1869, "for York and Hampton Circuit" was held May 31, in Hampton. If the five churches had been made into one circuit, as the above would indicate, at least the representatives of the York County Churches found the distance too great for them to attend. Those present were Rev. D. P. Wills, Presiding Elder; G. M. Peek who acted as secretary; Rev. J. D. Lumsden, preacher in charge, and Bro. G. T. Tennelle, steward. However the financial report included the following: "Hampton church paid $36.50; Fox Hill, $13.24; Tabernacle, $51; Providence, $2.00; Zion, $25.; two public collections, $6.32 and $8.87, making a total of $142.93 for ministeral support."

The third Conference was well attended; there were seventeen members of the Official Boards present, but no one was there from Hampton and only one steward from Fox Hill. The Conference was held at Providence August 9, 1869. Six Sunday Schools with 368 members were reported. An item of business that indicated forethought on the part of the group was the appointing of a "Committee to provide a home for the Preacher in charge for another year."

When the record was made for the fourth Quarterly Conference, held October 17, 1869 at Zion Church it was listed, "for Hampton and York Circuit"[96] and it continued with that designation through 1870.

There were six Sunday Schools with a slight gain over the previous year. William Wesley Topping was recommended by Fox Hill *Society* as a suitable person to be licensed to exhort, and he was licensed accordingly. The Pastor's report on the cause of Missions said:[96a] "Very little is doing for this cause, in *consequence of our poverty,* and having to purchase parsonage furniture at the beginning of the year, the pastor regarded it unnecessary to press this on our people."

There were some sixty conversions on the circuit during the year. Earlier in the year it had been reported that "the Sunday School at Hampton was a union school in conjunction with the Baptist but in the judgment of the pastor a separate school was demanded." There were two items of miscellaneous business at this Conference.

95. Quarterly Conference Minutes for York, 1852-1879—P. 135.
96. Ibid pp. 139-140; 135.
96a. Ibid pp. 139-140; 135.

The first item recorded a set of trustees for "The Hall". This referred to the "Sons of Temperance" Hall in Poquoson where a Sunday School had been organized just prior to May 2, 1868. Trustees elected were John L. Amory, George W. Page, Elisha Lawson, Jr., Elias R. Holloway, Henry Forrest, Wm. S. Watkins and Edward Bradshaw.

The second item read: "Resolved that the Board of Trustees of Hampton Church property be, and are hereby authorized by the Quarterly Conference to sell the vacant lots in Hampton to the best advantage to aid them in erecting a house of worship." Hampton was credited with paying the house rent for the Preacher in charge, amount, $76.80 and Fox Hill, $7.00.

The Rev. J. D. Lumsden was returned for the "Hampton and York Circuit" in the Fall of 1869, and Rev. D. P. Wells, again, was Presiding Elder. The four years following the close of the war had been, truly, a "Reconstruction Period" for the Methodist Church in York County and in Hampton as well as in other phases of living, but a turn for the better was noticable by 1870.

At the first Quarterly Conference for 1870, held at Providence Church February 12, there was no representative from Hampton, and only two from Fox Hill, and no financial report from the area.

The minister was pleased to report to the number and state of Sunday Schools that,[97] "there are three schools that have been in operation *all winter,** and are doing very well. These schools are at Providence, Zion, and The Hall." He was sorry to say that, "all the rest have ceased; the one at Hampton for the want of a place to hold it in, the old house being too delapidated and cold."

The missionary plan adopted was, "that each member of this circuit pay according to ability for the support of said cause. The motion was carried unanimously."

97. Ibid p 141-142.
* This was the first record of Sunday Schools in operation *all winter,* on York Circuit.

The Fox Hill Church was host to the second Quarterly Conference of 1870. They met on April 23, and Rev. Lumsden gave a full report on the Sunday Schools, saying, as he had done, at the First Quarterly Conference that three schools had continued all through the winter, and he emphasized that[98] "The one at The Hall now has 75 scholars and 26 officers and teachers. The schools at Fox Hill and Tabernacle were discontinued last Fall for the want of a proper interest to carry them on. At Hampton the school was discontinued for want of a place to meet in, after the old shanty was taken down, but now, having secured a place, we expect to commence next Sabbath.

In his pastoral report on the general state of the church he said: "Several have been expelled for drunkenness and frolicking, which has in a great measure, put a stop to those evils." Besides the money raised for pastoral support, it was reported that $18.40 has been raised at Providence Church to pay a debt on said church and to finish the same. "At Zion $25. has been raised by the children to furnish Sabbath Schools with books."

When the question was asked regarding miscellaneous business "Brother Whittington Crockett offered his resignation as steward at Zion on account of his age and infirmities, which was accepted, and Fred P. Crockett was elected to fill his place. The following Resolution was adopted: "Resolved, that the fidelity of Bro. Whittington Crockett as a steward during the entire time of his official position compels us to express our regret that circumstances over which he has no control makes it necessary for him to resign and (the Quarterly Conference) expresses to him the thanks of the church for the faithful discharge of his duties."

A building committee for Hampton was appointed. Members of it were Sylvester Kelly, C. F. Tennille, G. M. Peek and J. C. Phillips.

The Presiding Elder brought the claim of Randolph-Macon College before the Conference and a pledge of $12 was made for the College.

The third Conference was held at Zion Church July 9, 1870. The Sunday School report showed improvement, with eight schools on the circuit, and a total of 475 enrolled. They were listed as Zion, Tabernacle, "Little Tabernacle" instead of "The

98. Ibid P. 143.

Hall", Smithville, Fox Hill, Providence, Hampton and "a very feeble one at Yorktown." This was the first mention of the work at Yorktown since the Civil War.

The Fourth Quarterly Conference[99] is usually the most important Conference of the year and it was no exception in 1870. The meeting was held at Tabernacle Church August 27, and a steward's meeting or adjourned conference was held November 9.

Rev. D. P. Wills, Presiding Elder, called the meeting to order and there were 21 members of the Circuit Official Board present. The Sunday Schools had grown during the quarter from 475 members to 566. The same eight schools were listed, as formerly and the record gave detailed statistics.

For the cause of Missions $67.50 had been raised which include 'Conference Collections', Bishop's fund and Missions; $44 had been raised for Sunday School purposes, and expended. For Randolph-Macon College they gave $9.05.

In answer to the question of miscellaneous business, an important report was given. It said:[99] "Report from the trustees of Hampton was read and ordered to be filed." One could wish it had been recorded in the old Minutes book, but such was not the case. However, subsequent events point to Hampton having its new church building ready. "A verbal report was received from the trustees of the *other churches*, all trying to improve and finish their church edifices; titles all good and Boards of trustees full."

The November 9th meeting was called to order at Tabernacle and four stewards brought the financial report regarding pastoral support. It is interesting to note that "the meeting then adjourned to Hampton" and another session was held and more money turned in, and the minister was paid his full salary of $625 plus four dollars extra.

The time had come for Hampton-Fox Hill to be separated from York Circuit, making a circuit of those two areas, and leaving York Circuit of Tabernacle, Zion, and Providence, and a Sunday School at "Little Tabernacle", which in about 14 years, became Trinity Church.

99. Ibid, p. 147-49.

A new Presiding Elder, Rev. A. G. Brown was assigned the district and a new preacher in charge, Rev. Joseph Lear took over the York Circuit, while Rev. J. D. Lumsden went with the Hampton Circuit.

The First Quarterly Conference[100] for 1870-71 was held March 6, 1871 at Providence and the adjustments, necessary because of the separation of the two circuits, were made. There were three Sunday Schools in successful operation and a fourth one to be set up at once. Plans were made for the collection for Missions and the pastor's salary was set.

Although "Little Tabernacle" was not at this time, an organized Church, it contributed to preacher's support. District stewards were elected and "Bro. J. C. Wainwright was elected to the Sunday School Convention to be held in Charlottesville; Bro. Wm. A. Nottingham the alternate."

At the second Conference, "held at Little Tabernacle" five Sunday Schools were reported and the Preacher in charge said: "The Congregations continue about the same, except at one church where there has been increasing attendance. We could wish for more harmony of feeling and union, but are yet encouraged to hope for success in the future."

At this Conference, "Bro. Edward Hopkins and Bro. John R. Chandler were appointed a committee to obtain from Bro. Lumsden a list of the parsonage furniture and to take care of the same." Included in the Old Minutes Book for York Circuit is a list of the articles of housekeeping, marked: "Parsonage Furniture taken by Rev. J. Lear" and another, marked, "Sent by J. W. Davis. The balance of the furniture was awarded to Hampton and Fox Hill in proportion to the amounts paid in, by those churches for the original purchase."

Then, in order to be certain of a fair division of the furniture, it was listed on another page, the evaluation of each item, be it ever so small, was given, and at the end, a total evaluation of the part allotted to York Circuit; being $126.20.

Also on the credit side was recorded:

100. Ibid pp. 150-158.

"Contributed by Zion	$35.25
"Contributed by Providence	25.00
"Contributed by Tabernacle	66.45

$126.70, Less 50c counterfeit, making a total of $126.20."

"Examined and equally divided."

(Signed) G. T. Tennille; G. M. Peek.

The question as to where the next Conference would be held brought the answer, "at *Big* Tabernacle", on August 26, 1871. The work of the circuit moved forward smoothly and 22 new members were reported at the third Conference. "About 35 or 40 have professed religion but about 10 of them are members of the church."

When the fourth Quarterly Conference met October 28 at Zion Church the finances were paid up. Items listed were funds for Sunday Schools, Church repairs, "Preacher's education, $5.00", Bishop's fund, Conference Collection, Presiding Elder's salary and support of the Preacher in charge. He was paid $650, a 'raise' of $25.

As to the general state of the church, Rev. Lear said: "Since last Quarterly meeting there has been some revival at *Little Tabernacle* in continuation of the one at Tabernacle and principally through the labors of Bro. Edward Hopkins and the members of the church. We have received in all, through the year, 70 members.

One item of interest was recorded as follows: "The Presiding Elder, wishing to know if any arrangement could be made to *receive Fox Hill* into the circuit; the following resolution was passed.

Resolved that we would consent if necessary, that Fox Hill be added to the circuit, provided a single (unmarried) preacher can be sent to the circuit as colleague to the Preacher in charge. Then the Conference met at Little Tabernacle according to adjournment."

They met, called the roll and proceeded to finish the churches' financial business for the year. Then, "on motion the resolution (with reference to Fox Hill) in regard to the change of organization was resumed, *and lost.*"

When the Virginia Conference met in the Fall of 1871, a new Presiding Elder was assigned to the District and another preacher for York Circuit, was named. Rev. P. A. Peterson was the Elder, and the Rev. R. N. Crooks was made Preacher in charge of York. It will be remembered that Rev. Crooks was the first preacher for the York Churches, after the Civil War[101] and he served three years 1865-66 through 1868.

The four Quarterly Conferences for the year 1871-72 were held as follows: March 9, 1872 at Providence Church; May 18th at Tabernacle; August 24 at Zion; November 2, at *Tabernacle Chapel.*

Sunday Schools were in operation at Providence, Zion, *Big* Tabernacle, *Little Tabernacle* and Smithville. The pastor commended the schools on the use of the Methodist literature, "S.S. Visitor, Our Little People, Lesson Papers and S.S. Magazine." The pastor reported at the first Conference regarding the state of the church. He said, in part:

"There has been some dancing among some of the young members of the church, which, I fear, was encouraged by some of the old members who ought to be nurturing fathers and mothers in the church. There are a goodly number of our members who are manifesting a zeal for God, the church, and the salvation of Souls. As to the attendance upon family prayers I have not yet the information to make an accurate report. However, I fear it is neglected by many, to the injury of personal piety and religious influence on the children. I fear a good many of the male members indulge in dram-drinking; and some, at times, to partial intoxication. . . . The weather has been such that our regular preaching has been much hindered, but we are encouraged to hope that when the weather becomes settled our congregations will be large."

A matter of importance before the York Churches in 1872 was the housing of the pastor and his family. A house was rented, and the furniture that was allotted to York when parsonage furniture was divided between Hampton and York the previous year, had to be supplemented. In December 1871 Rev. Crooks bought household furnishings in the amount of $111.56 and he was repaid at the Quarterly Conferences. A list of the items appears in the Minute-books.

101. Ibid p. 159.

In March, 1872 a committee was appointed to select a cite and solicit subscription's to build a parsonage and report to the next Quarterly Conference. The subject was discussed at the next two conferences and others were added to the committee. The report said:[102] "It is expedient to secure a parsonage at once, at the most elegable (sic) place." At the fourth Conference they were able to report some progress, for the committee had really been working. They had chosen Cockletown as the place to have a parsonage and they had the amount of $985.62 in money and subscriptions towards building it.

The York Churches had labored under a handicap in the summer of 1872. "Two schools were suspended on account of the small pox, namely, Tabernacle and The Chapel." They also "had to suspend preaching at the Tabernacle Chapel as it is in the community where the small pox is. The congregation at Tabernacle is small as the people are afraid of small pox which has been in a part of the congregation. There have been five deaths." "Thirty-two professed conversion and thirteen have joined the church."

Nine men "were elected trustees to hold the parsonage to be erected or bought for York Circuit, M.E. Church, South," at the end of the conference year, and the trustees of the churches gave their reports, as follows:[103] "We the trustees for Tabernacle beg leave to report our house in good condition and will seat 500 persons, and worth $1000. The Bd. of Trustees not full.

Ed. Hopkins, Chairman."

"We, the trustees for *Tabernacle Chapel* beg leave to report, our house yet unplastered, otherwise a good house. Will seat 150 persons, and worth $400. Bd. of trustees full. Geo. Page—Chairman."

"We, the trustees for Zion Church beg leave to report our house yet unplastered, otherwise a tolerable good house, worth $500., and will seat 300 persons. Five dollars repairs made this year. The Bd. of trustees not full.—F. P. Crockett, Chairman."

"We the trustees for Providence beg leave to report our house in good condition, worth $1000., and will seat 300 persons. Some repairs made this year. Bd. of trustees full.—J. R. Chandler, Chairman."

102. Ibid p. 163.
103. Ibid p. 165.

There was no change made at Annual Conference for Presiding Elder or Preacher in charge of York Circuit, for 1872-73—Rev. Crooks continued his good work. He told of the growth of the five Sunday Schools and said "special attention is being given to singing." Ninety new song books have been bought during the quarter. Also a "Band of Hope Temperance Society" has been organized in four schools, with success.

On April 26, 1873 at the second Quarterly Conference the committee on Parsonage presented "a contract for the purchase of the lot and residence of Rev. George W. Trimyer at Cockletown, which was read and adopted and is as follows:[104] 'Articles of Agreement, made and entered into this 10th day of March, 1873, between George W. Trimyer and Anna W., his wife, of York Co., Va. of the one part and Wm Tignor, J. C. Wainwright, Edward Hopkins, Wilton Wilson and R. N. Crooks appointed a committee by the Quarterly Conference of York Circuit to build or buy a house for a parsonage to be held by trustees in trust for the M. E. Church, South, of the other part. Witness that the said Geo. W. Trimyer and Anna W. his wife agree to and with the said committee that they, the said Geo. W. Trimyer and Anna W. his wife will sell the said committee ten acres of land including the dwelling house and all other appurtinances thereon, situate at Cockletown in York Co., Va., for the sum of eight hundred dollars, good and lawful money of the United States, to wit: Five hundred dollars to be paid by the 10th day of April, 1873, and the other three hundred dollars with interest on or before the 1st day of January, 1874, and the said Geo. W. Trimyer and Anna W. Trimyer, doth covenant and agree to give possession to the said committee on or before the 10th day of April, 1873 and doth further agree and bind themselves, their heirs etc. that on the payment of the said last three hundred dollars they will execute to the before mentioned trustees, for the M.E. Church, South, a good and lawful deed of the County of York and State of Virginia and to the above agreement we doth severally bind ourselves, as witness our hands and seals the 10th day of March, 1873.

Signed by the six trustees."

The pastor and his family moved into their new home immediately.

104. Ibid P. 170.

The preacher gave a detailed report[105] of the membership in 1873. "There were 166 males, 309 females, making 475 members on the roll of the circuit. Of this number, 313 are married, 36 widows, and 126 single. The majority of this number are pious Christians, striving to advance the Redeemer's Kingdom. There is some irregularity among some of the members. There are none now selling intoxicating liquors, that I know of, but there are some who drink at public bars and it is to be feared some drink to intoxication. There are some disposition among some of our young members to encourage and participate in worldly play parties and mimic dancing and foolish song-singing which are so hurtful to godliness. Attendance upon public worship is tolerable good when the weather is favorable and the roads passable. Prayer and class meetings are not well attended. Two children baptised, and two deaths; one was sister Mary James, the widow of the late Rev. Cyrus James in her 87th year."

Another death that occurred during the year was that of Rev. John W. Shields, local preacher, July 26, 1873. At the third Quarterly Conference a "Tribute of Respect" was entered in the minutes.

At the end of the year, the parsonage committee made its final report, listing names of those who contributed, and amount each person gave, and how it was expended. They were then discharged.

Thirty-five members were added to the Church during the quarter and the pastor said that "the state of the church is good."

The Rev. Crooks continued as pastor of York Circuit until the Fall of 1875, when the annual Virginia Conference met and the Rev. Benjamin C. Spiller was assigned to York, It was said of him:[106]

"The Conference claims in Mr. Spiller a member with a record of enviable merit. Success rewards his faithful ministry, and judgement in the administration of church business has ever marked his public career. The sterling virtues of the itinerancy are crowned in his life. Self-denying, careful for the things of God, dilligent and watchful, he holds an honored place in the

105. Ibid—page 167.
106. Lafferty's *Sketches of the Va. Conference*—1880 Edition.

hearts of his brethren, and is valued highly, both for his ability to edify the church, and for his private worth.

His parents were Patrick and Louisa Spiller. He was born May 13, 1819; was converted in August, 1845, and joined the Methodist Episcopal Church. He entered the ministry in November, 1848." He served thirteen appointments before being assigned to York Circuit in 1875. He was pastor here for four years, and the churches went forward during his ministry.

In the Fall of 1879 the Rev. Spiller was moved, and he was followed by Rev. J. T. Dalby. He and family, were soon settled in the parsonage in Cockletown.

"On December 10, 1879 a meeting[107] of the Board of Stewards was held at Providence Church. It was agreed that the assessment for the support of the ministry should be $575., including $75 rent for parsonage.

The entire assessment was distributed as follows: Tabernacle, $299.00; Zion, $149.50; Providence, $149.50, making a total of $598.

Stewards present:

From Tabernacle, Wm. C. Messick,
From Zion, Cary W. Crockett,
From Providence, J. C. Wainwright; R. W. Crockett, Thos D. Hudgins; Wm. H. Howard; J. F. White; A. W. Powell.

As the conference year 1879-80 became history, it was noted that the three church buildings, Tabernacle, Zion and Providence, were adequate; that each church had a Sunday school, and a fourth one served the people below Tabernacle in a building called "The Hall" and "Little Tabernacle"; that the York Circuit owned a good parsonage in Cockletown; that the boards of trustees for each church building and the parsonage were up-to-date. The people were meeting the financial obligations of their churches, and the spiritual condition was promising and hopeful.

Thus growth was everywhere apparent in the churches of York Circuit.

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107. Quarterly Conference Minutes for York Circuit, 1852-1879, Page 178.

PART III

CHAPTER I

York County Methodist Churches 1880-1890

The Rev. J. T. Dalby was preacher in charge of the three Methodist churches, Tabernacle, Zion and Providence, and five or more Sunday Schools of York Circuit in 1879-1882.

He followed the Rev. B. C. Spiller, and lived in the parsonage in Cockletown.

Dalby was followed by Rev. J. H. Crown in the Fall of 1882. The Presiding Elder over Norfolk District at that time was Rev. Joseph A. Proctor.[110]

When the first Quarterly Conference for 1882-83 met, it was decided that a committee should be appointed to examine the parsonage and report at the next conference any needed repairs. The thoughtfulness of the Official board in this matter, reflected a two-fold purpose, – that of improving the church property, and, at the same time, providing for the comfort of the minister and his family.

The Providence Church building, which, it will be remembered, was erected in 1849 began to show a run down condition in the late 1870's and its members began to plan for a new building. In 1883 the new church was built, at a cost of about $600. Mr. Fowler Hamilton was the builder. The new building was erected about 125 feet to the East of the old church.

At the second Quarterly Conference in May, 1883 "the trustees of Providence Church were authorized to sell the old Providence Church building and the proceeds to go toward defraying part of the debt of the new church." Accordingly, they sold it to Mr. Thomas J. Crockett of Cockletown (Grafton) who used the material to build a store on his premises.

In 1884 more land was added to the Providence Church property when Arthur B. White sold 1½ acres adjoining the original lot of one acre.[111]

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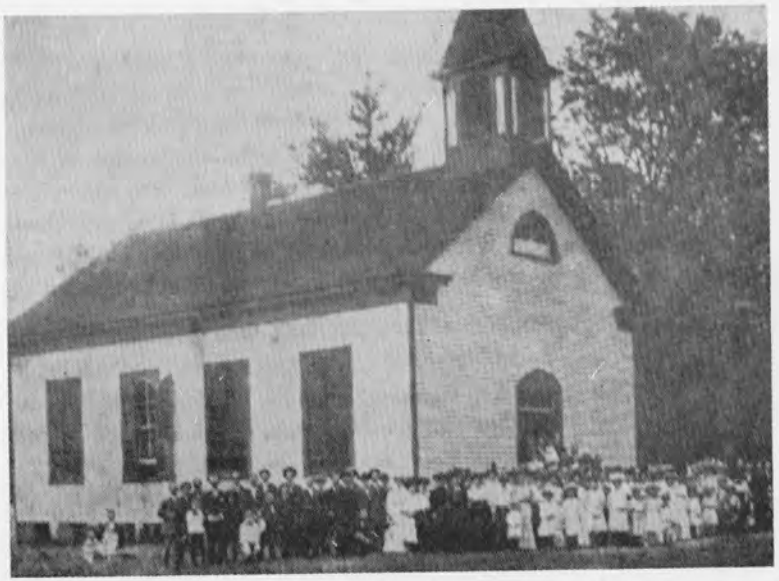
110. Quarterly Conference Register for York Circuit 1883-1886.
111. York Deed Book No. 20—page 475.



The Second Providence Methodist Church
Built in 1883

Rev. James H. Crown[112] stayed on the York Circuit only one year. "He was the synonym of cheerful piety and robust health. Ambition never vexed his serene spirit, nor envy soured his genial soul. He spoke with force, and aptly. His name was held in honor, and his visits were everywhere treasured as seasons of joy and profit. He was a favorite among the churches and in the Conference. He was born in Montgomery County, Maryland on the first of March, 1834." He entered the Virginia Conference in 1856 and had served fifteen appointments before coming to York.

The Conference sent Rev. J. S. Morris in the Fall of 1883 to serve the York Circuit. Before he had held the first Quarterly Conference (Feb. 2, 1884) disaster had struck, for the Tabernacle Church was burned[113] on Christmas Eve, 1883. Immediately, plans were made for rebuilding the church. It was decided by the trustees and other members of the Official Board

112. Lafferty's *Sketches of Va. Conference*–1880 edition p. 94.
113. An article in Daily Press, April 16, 1950.

to change the location. F. W. Carmines donated the lot where the present (1959) church is located. A new frame building of one room, one story, containing only the church auditorium, was built on the new lot.

At the third Quarterly Conference, held at Zion June 30, 1884 it was, "Resolved that the trustees of the old Tabernacle Church are hereby authorized to sell the old church *lot* and invest the proceeds in their new church, now building." They adjourned, to meet next Quarter "at the *new* Tabernacle."

The lot where the first and second Tabernacle Churches were built, was adjoining land of the late Dr. Peter White.[114] The new Tabernacle was completed and dedicated in 1884 by the Presiding Elder, Rev. W. E. Judkins.

The Main body, without the wings and steeple, was the 3rd Tabernacle Methodist Church, Poquoson, York County, Virginia
Built in 1884

When the fourth Quarterly Conference met August 25, it was at Tabernacle Church. The report from the trustees of the church

114. From a conversation in June, 1955 with Mrs. Columbia White at her home home in Poquoson. She has died since then.

property[115] at that Conference said: "Providence Church in good condition and worth $1500. Trustees from Zion Church reported church in good condition and worth $1000. Trustees of Tabernacle Church report *a new church just finished* and worth $2000."

Rev. Morris served the York Churches only one year. He was succeeded in the Fall of 1884 by the Rev. J. E. McSparran." He was born[116] in Albemarle County, Va. July 24, 1833. He was converted under the ministry of Rev. Ballard E. Gibson in 1853 at Chestnut Grove Church in Earlyville. Over fifty persons embraced religion at that meeting, among them being his mother, brother and two sisters." He had been a member of the Virginia Conference twenty-seven years, when he came to York.

It was said of Rev. Mc Sparran that "he had been successful in advancing the temporal interests of the church, especially in securing, repairing, and refurnishing parsonages and in building churches." He put this talent to work immediately in York, and during the two years of his ministry there, the *Trinity* Methodist Church in lower Poquoson was organized and the church building was built.

A review of events leading up to the establishment of Trinity Church showed that as early as 1868 there was a beginning made in the Lower Poquoson or Messick area. A Sunday School was organized[117] just prior to May 2, 1868 at the "Sons of Temperance Hall in Poquoson." The pastor reported the school as "very new."

The Conference report August 9, 1869 gave an account of Sunday School work and included "the Sunday School at "The Hall with two superintendents, seven teachers, and fifty-five scholars."

On October 17, 1869 the following *Board of Trustees* for "The Hall" was elected by the York Circuit Quarterly Conference: John L. Amory, George W. Page, Elisha Lawson Jr., Elias R. Holloway, Henry Forrest, William S. Watkins and Edward Bradshaw.

At the Quarterly Conference February 12, 1870, in answer to the question as to what amounts had been raised for the benevolent enterprises of the church the statement was recorded, "Raised $30. at The Hall to pay on building." This seems to

115. Quarterly Conference Register for York Circuit 1883-1886.
116. Lafferty's *Sketches of Va. Conference.* 1880 edition P. 112.
117. Minutes of Quarterly Conference of York Circuit 1852-1879.

have been a sort of lodge room, and not a church building, altho' it has been said that the building was used for both day school and Sunday School Services.[118]

"April 23, 1870 the Sunday School at 'The Hall'[117] had 75 scholars and 26 teachers and officers." Report of Sunday Schools July 9, 1870 said, "at *Little Tabernacle* there are 118 in S.S." The report on August 27, 1870 told of "37 copies of 'The Visitor' being used at 'Little Tabernacle' with 110 scholars and 37 officers and teachers."

When Quarterly Conferences met March 6, 1871 "Little Tabernacle" contributed to the pastor's salary, for the report read, "from boath (sic) Tabernacles, $76." The second conference of 1871 met at "Little Tabernacle." Oct. 28, 1871 at the fourth conference of the year, the pastor said, "there has been some revival at Little Tabernacle, in continuation of one at Tabernacle, and principally through the labors of Bro. Edward Hopkins and the members of the church."

In May, 1872, it was recorded that there was small pox in the area of "Tabernacle Chapel" which caused the Sunday School to be suspended for a short time. In November, 1872 the conference met at 'Tabernacle Chapel' and "*Trustees for Tabernacle Chapel*" reported 'our house yet unplastered, otherwise a good house. Will seat 150 persons and worth $400. Board of trustees full—(signed) George Page, Chairman. On Feb. 1, 1873 the report for the York Circuit included "Sunday School at 'Little Tabernacle' which was useing 43 Visitors and 25 Little People Leaflets."

All of these recorded notes show a continuous interest in a church organization, leading up to the focal point of the group becoming the fourth Methodist Church in York County, and a part of the York Circuit under the leadership of Rev. Mc Sparran in 1884-85.

At the third Quarterly Conference,[119] held June 30, 1884 at Zion, R. J. Forrest and Henry Watkins were elected as trustees for "what is known as *Little Tabernacle Church.*" At the close of the first conference for 1884-85, which was held Dec. 1, the place for the next Conference was selected, as follows: "At *Trinity Church* if completed, if not, at Tabernacle."

118. Quoted from an article in Daily Press in 1937.
119. Quarterly Conference Register for York Circuit 1883-1886.

There was a meeting of the Board of Stewards[120] of York Circuit December 30, 1884, held at Tabernacle Church when the budget for the year was set at $840. "On motion the amount was equally divided *among the four churches.*"

The minutes of the third Quarterly Conference, held May 23rd, 1885 at Providence carried the following important record: "The general spiritual state of the church is good, as indicated by attendance on the preaching, class meetings, prayer meetings and church enterprise. *Trinity Church* was, on last Sabbath *dedicated* to the worship of God by the Rev. R. N. Sledd, free of debt. The church cost $1700."

The First Trinity Methodist Church
Built in 1884-1885

According to a newspaper article,[121] "the lot, on which the first Trinity Church was built, was donated by W. T. Carmines. The building committee was composed of Solomon C. Evans, Elias. R. Holloway, J. Frank Amory, Edward Bradshaw and Elisha Lawson. The contract was let to Charles Cake, and the builder was the Rev. J. D. Hoiser."

120. Ibid.
121. Article in Daily Press in 1937.

The minutes of the fourth Quarterly Conference for the year 1884-85 held Sept. 5, 1885 at Tabernacle Church, gives a detailed account of York Circuit. It was recorded that:[122] "there were four organized Societies (Churches); two local preachers; 769 white members and one colored member; 9 adults and 50 infants were baptized during the year; two members were added to the roll by certificate, and 68 on profession of faith, making a net increase of 40.

There were four Sunday schools, with 101 officers and teachers and 449 scholars; 370 books in S.S. libraries, and $79.47 expended during the year for the Sunday Schools."

The Financial report recorded "$57.01 for foreign missions; $16.50 for domestic missions; $35. for Conference claimants; $10. Bishop's Fund; For Education (besides the Sunday Schools) $5; for the poor $41.20; for church extension, $6.62; for other objects $317.92. Salary of Preacher in Charge $800, paid him $809.22; his traveling expense $30; salary of Presiding Elder $110."

Under church property, the report read: "number of churches, 4; value of churches $5000; number of parsonages, one; value, $1500."

It was stated that part of this report was completed at the Adjourned Conference on November 9. The pastor, Rev. J. E. Mc Sparran reported:[123] "The Spiritual state of the church is good. Three out of four of the churches have been blessed with seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. Twenty-seven were added to the church at Trinity; twenty have applied for membership at Providence; eighteen at Zion. The membership will be increased between 70 and 75. The revival reached the entire membership of these churches, besides the 50 or 60 backsliders whose names were already on the church register. At Tabernacle, I was sick and unable to preach after the first day of meeting. Brothers Crooks, James and White labored faithfully there."

Records of the second year of Rev. Mc Sparran's pastorate at York Circuit list a stewards meeting when the budget was

122. Quarterly Conference Register for York Circuit 1883-1886.
123. Ibid.

set, January 2, 1886; the Quarterly Conferences were held Jan. 23, at Providence; April 17 at Trinity; July 10, at Zion; and Oct. 16, 1886 at Tabernacle. Two of the churches had organized Young Mens' Christian Associations.

At the fourth Conference the trustees of the church property said: "Zion Church, condition good; value, $1200; Providence, condition good, $1500; Tabernacle, condition, new, value $2000; Trinity Church, value $1800; parsonage, condition good, value $2000."

At the Adjourned Conference on November 15, the financial report was completed. Rev. Mc Sparran went up to Annual Conference with a good report of the work on York Circuit. He was sent to other fields of labor.

The Rev. Charles T. Taylor was appointed as pastor of the four churches of York Circuit in the Fall of 1886. He served the full period of four years and was quite popular with his members and also with his Virginia Conference associates. The work was well organized in all four churches and all of the church buildings and the parsonage were in good repair. It was a time of growth on York Circuit.

CHAPTER II

York County Methodist Churches 1890-1902

In the Fall of 1890 Rev. J. E. Potts was sent to York Circuit. He was a native of Loudoun[124] County. His birthplace was near Hillsboro; he was born on February 9, 1831. He was converted, January 1846. He said of his call to the ministry: 'I cannot tell (when called); it is connected with my earliest recollections; I have no knowledge of the time, when the call first began to be developed in my mind. A fixed and steady impression was in my mind, that it was my duty to preach the Gospel'. He was licensed September 6, 1852. He had advantages at classical schools, Randolph Macon and William and Mary College, for educational training. He had the A.B. degree. On June 14, 1857, he married Miss Mary Ann Harrell, of Williamsburg, Va."

There were four sons in the Methodist Parsonage in Grafton (formerly Cockletown) Edgar A., Thomas N., Eugene J., and Reginald H. Potts, and all of them became Methodist preachers.

Rev. Paul Whitehead D.D.[125] was the presiding elder of Richmond District, (of which York Circuit was a part) at the time when Rev. Potts was preacher in charge of the York Churches.

"Trustees for the parsonage property, 'appointed at the first Quarterly Conference of 1890-91, on February 9, were J. Y. S. Slaight, R. W. Crockett, W. H. W. White, Edward Bradshaw and William H. Howard."

Rev. Potts gave the following report of the State of the Church at the second Conference May 16, 1891: "The word of God is regularly expounded; the congregations are good; order is excellent, the attention is strict; baptism is administered; the Lord's supper is received by the people of the church generally; prayer meetings are regularly held, and the worship of God in the household exists to a large extent. The people of York Circuit are a pious and religious people, comparing favorably

124. Lafferty's *Sketches of Va. Conference,* 1880 Edition P. 78.
125. Quarterly Conference Record for York Circuit 1891-1894.

with any people under the sun. The pastor holds a prayer meeting regularly at Grafton."

It was also recorded at the May 16th Conference that "Brother R. N. Crooks was elected superintendent of Sunday school at Yorktown." This was the first mention of Methodism in Yorktown since a report in 1870 said that there was "a feeble Sunday school at Yorktown."

The Woman's Missionary Societies in two churches and four "Rosebud" Societies were reported at the fourth Conference in 1891, altho the dates of their organizing were not given. Five Sunday Schools were reported at that conference.

E. A. Potts, son of the preacher in charge of York Circuit, was recommended to the Annual Conference for admission on trial, by the fourth Quarterly Conference, Nov. 7, 1891. He had been serving as a local preacher and the record stated:[126] "I beg to submit the following report. I have, during the summer, helped in the meetings at the different churches. Since, I have occasionally preached as occasion has demanded. (signed) E. A. Potts."

Rev. B. F. Watson and Rev. John F. White, local preachers also gave written reports. The latter told the name of the Zion Rosebud Society, which was "Zion Reapers", and the Providence Society, called "White Rosebuds of Providence."

There were only three conferences held in 1892, and they emphasized the "solid foundation" of the church. Five Sunday Schools were in progress, as formerly – one in each of the four churches, and the fifth one at Yorktown.

The first Conference for 1892-93, met at Zion Church Jan. 28, 1893. The pastor told of the severe winter weather, with much snow. He stated, however, that attendance had been good at all the services despite the winter weather. Rev. Potts said:[127] "I have been to every appointment and have preached twice every Sunday since Conference, except Christmas Day at Providence, when my son Tommie preached for me."

Thus a second son of the preacher in charge was following the example of his father, and preparing to enter the ministry.

At the third Conference J. E. White was licensed as a local preacher and the Quarterly Conference passed a resolution "to

126. Ibid.
127. Ibid.

recommend him to the authorities at Randolph Macon College as a suitable person to receive the benefits of a privileged student." J. F. Forrest was licensed as an exhorter at this meeting. It was reported that twenty-two babies were baptized and 87 persons were received into membership on profession of faith during the quarter. Extensive revivals in Poquoson had added many members to both Tabernacle and Trinity Churches. The pastor said, "the general outlook is most encouraging."

Nov. 4, 1893, at Tabernacle Church, the record of the fourth Quarterly Conference revealed that a third son of the minister had been licensed as a local preacher. The report said: "E. J. Potts and J. E. White were passed in examination of character, and their licenses have been given so lately, they did not need to be renewed at this time." Licenses for B. F. Watson and John F. White were renewed. The above John E. White was a son of Rev. John F. White.

At the fourth Conference the following year, (Oct. 13, 1894) "Eugene J. Potts was recommended and passed by the Conference to the traveling connection."

Sometime, during the four years of Rev. Potts' pastorate of York Circuit a situation arose that produced two factions in Providence Church. Because of this, another church building was erected in Grafton and one or another of the Potts sons held services there. Some of Providence members had their membership transferred to this new church, but it is a matter of record that after a few years they came back into membership at Providence. At a Church Conference on April 26, 1896 at Providence the minutes stated: "The following have been restored to our roll from Grafton, – J. J. Nottingham, Wm. H. Howard, W. A. Nottingham, W. S. Nottingham, M. E. Wornom, Ruth F. Burcher, Maud Martin, Lula Martin, J. G. Martin, Wm. E. Winder, Sydney Evans, W. T. Wainwright, M. S. Wainwright, Mrs. Mamie Wainwright, C. C. Wainwright."

Rev. Charles E. Hobday came in the Fall of 1894 to York Circuit as the new preacher in charge. He served three years.

Rev. Hobday[128] "was born March 1, 1844 in Portsmouth, Va. His parents moved to Mathews County in December, 1856. He fought in the Civil War. In September, 1865 he was converted

128. Lafferty's *Sketches of the Va. Conference*, 1880 edition P. 153.

during a powerful revival at old Providence, Mathews County. He felt his call to the ministry, and yielding at last, he was licensed to preach, Sept. 13, 1867."

In 1895 there were five Sunday Schools on York Circuit;[129] one at each of the four churches, and th fifth one at Grafton. The small school at Yorktown did not report each quarter.

An Epworth League was started at Tabernacle in the summer of 1895 but it did not function more than a year. A few years later this branch of service became more firmly established.

At the fourth Quarterly Conference, held at Trinity Church, Oct. 19, 1895 trustees for the four churches and the parsonage were appointed; on April 11, 1896 three trustees for a *Yorktown lot*, church property were appointed, and all were confirmed by the York Circuit Court as follows:[130]

"At a Circuit Court for York County . . . held at the Courthouse . . . in Yorktown on Tuesday the 28th of April, AD 1896 . . . Commonwealth of Va. Present, The Hon. Benjamin T. Gunter, Judge of sd. court.

Upon the application of the proper authorities of the M.E. Church, South, in York County, Va. the Court doth appoint as Trustees of said church, for the Parsonage of York, L. F. Moore, J. M. Holloway, C. W. Smith, R. F. Amory, J. E. Crockett, and S. D. Ironmonger.

For Tabernacle Church, York Co., J. W. Phillips, D. G. Callis, F. W. Carmines, L. F. Moore and S. C. Phillips.

For Trinity Church, W. T. Forrest, E. R. Holloway, Elisha Lawson, R. J. Forrest and Edward Bradshaw.

For Providence Church, R. W. Crockett, J. F. White, Kemp Charles, T. T. Hudgins and W. E. Weston.

For Zion Church, F. P. Crockett, W. H. Hornsby, S. D. Ironmonger, Wm. Montgomery and Wm. Tigner; and to hold as Trustees *lot in Yorktown No. 74*, Rev. R. N. Crooks, R. A. Chandler and T. J. Crockett. These were appointed as Trustees to hold the real estate belonging to said Church under . . . Section 1399, Code of Va., 1887 in the place of the former trustees who have removed or are dead."

129. Quarterly Conference Minutes, York Circuit, 1895-98.
130. York County Common Law Order Minutes 1879-1906—P. 211.

This is the first mention of a lot in Yorktown on which to erect a Methodist church.

In 1896 W. E. Moore was recommended to the district conference as a qualified person to be licensed to preach. He was a member of Providence Church. He served one or more pastorates and then settled in his home community where his services were utilized in Providence.

It has been noted that a group of persons whose membership had been listed with the Grafton Church came back into membership at Providence April 26, 1896; following this action, the Quarterly Conference[131] held July 4, 1896 instructed "the trustees of the church at Grafton to sell their church property excepting the pews and pulpit, which shall not be sold, provided the said church shall bring two thirds of its original cost and shall be removed from the premises."

As the churches grew, and the field of service broadened steps were taken to divide the Circuit into two parts. While this did not take place for six more years, committees were appointed from time to time in the different churches and in the Quarterly Conferences to help bring about a division.

During the third year of Rev. Hobday's pastorate, the Richmond District Conference was invited to meet on York Circuit, and the invitation was accepted. Providence Church was chosen as the meeting place for the Conference.

The Rev. J. S. Wallace came to York Circuit in November, 1897 and served one year. During that time thirty-five were added to the Providence roll. His report told of a three-week's revival at the Grafton Chapel; also of an Epworth League being organized there. Thus, the building was being used by the Methodist Church, particularly, by Providence, while the trustees were trying to find a buyer for the property.

A Sunday School at Goodwins' Neck School house was first reported by Rev. J. F. White when he made his annual report October 2, 1897. He told of his work there on Sunday afternoons. During the year of 1898, "M. D. White[132] was the Sunday school superintendent at Goodwin's Neck." This school has continued through the years. According to the Methodist Church

131. Quarterly Conference Record for York Circuit 1895-99.
132. Ibid.

record, it was first sponsored by Providence. Later the Baptist Church held an occasional revival there. Then the Grafton Christian Church and York Methodist Circuit sponsored it jointly. Finally it became a Community Sunday School with members of several denominations working together.

Rev. L. P. Phaup was sent in the Fall of 1898 to York Circuit and Rev. J. S. Wallace was transferred to another area. Mr. Phaup was born Feb. 6, 1864 in Buckingham Co., Va. He was pastor in charge of York Circuit three years 1898-1901. The membership had grown to 1017 when he took over the pastorate and it continued to enlarge under his leadership.

Rev. J. H. Nicholson, in 1901-02, was the last pastor to serve the four churches of York Circuit. It had recently been said that the charge could not develop its potential until it was divided. "No one man can give the attention that is necessary for development to as large a membership as there is on this circuit, but, with the circuit divided, with the preacher immediately in contact with the people, as would then be the case, he could give his personal attention to the entire work, to an extent which is impossible now. This is about the best and only way to develop York Circuit, and lift it to a level with many other charges in the Conference."

Thus, after ten years of keeping the matter before the people, York Circuit was divided into two circuits. Tabernacle and Trinity made the East York Circuit; Providence and Zion made the York Circuit, each with a full time Pastor.

This took place at the Annual Conference in the Fall of 1902.

CHAPTER III

York County Methodist Churches 1903 to 1923

When York Circuit was divided in 1902 into circuits, the parsonage in Grafton continued to be the parsonage for the new, York Circuit.

The East York Circuit erected a suitable parsonage for its minister, in a central location of the Poquoson area.

It was in 1902 also that the Trinity Church building was enlarged. It was a rectangular building, and a section, added across one end of it changed it into the shape of a cross and provided sufficient room to meet the needs of the congregation.

In 1904 the Official Board of this new circuit elected its trustees and they were confirmed by the Circuit Court of York County (Va.) December 8, 1904.

"This day[133] application was made to the Court by the proper authorities of East York Circuit of the Va. Conference of the M. E. Church, South, the following were appointed Trustees of the property belonging to said churches, to-wit: For Tabernacle Church, C. W. Smith, W. F. White, P. H. Topping; Z. W. Messick, J. H. Forrest, and J. H. Moore. For Trinity Church, S. C. Evans, E. Bradshaw, J. F. Amory, J. H. Lawson, W. M. Freeman, and R. L. Forrest. For the Parsonage, J. F. Forrest, H. Topping and E. H. Hopkins.

Pastors of East York[134] during the next ten years were the Rev. D. J. Traynham, Rev. J. E. DeShazo, Rev. W. J. Williams and Rev. J. S. Wallace. Mr. Wallace had been pastor of the old four-church York Circuit back in 1897-98, and it was a source of satisfaction to him to serve these two churches effectively, where, formerly, he was handicapped because of the magnitude of the work.

During Mr. Wallace's pastorate Tabernacle Church was rebuilt and redecorated. In June, 1912 the new building was dedicated by Dr. Thomas R. Reeves. Thus progress was noted in both of the churches of East York – Tabernacle and Trinity.

133. York County Va. Common Law Minutes 1879-1906–pp 339-340.
134. Newspaper Clipping from Daily Press in 1937.

The Rev. J. W. Baker was sent in November, 1902 to the new, York Circuit, (Zion and Providence Churches), and he served three years, as the first pastor of *two churches only*, in upper York County. He was able to be in much closer touch with all of his members than other ministers had been, because of the smaller area embraced in the circuit. During his ministry, Zion Church was enlarged, by the addition of a wing on each side, thus changing the shape of the building from rectangular, to the form of a cross. Boss Walker and Baker Hansford were the carpenters. Mr. Baker was followed by Rev. J. R. Eggleston in the Fall of 1905.

Mr. Eggleston[135] and family lived in the parsonage in Grafton. Forty-two members were added to the church rolls in 1906. Dr. W. V. Tudor was Presiding Elder.

In 1907 Providence Church, through the Rev. John F. White, Local Preacher, sponsored a revival at "Morrison Station, resulting in thirteen members." Mr. Eggleston said that "Bro. White has a plan on foot to build a church at that point."

At the first Conference in 1908 "trustees for the church property at Morrison were confirmed – Pensy Steward, John L. Davis, W. T. Swoop, John E. Wornom, Walter Smith and E. M. Handy."

In July, 1909 Mr. Eggleston reported: "We have held a protracted service at Morrison, the results of which were, that every church in the community was helped by this meeting. We handed over to the Baptists three converts and one reclamation."

Mr. Eggleston served York Circuit four years. He left a record of interest. It follows:[136]

"Recapitulation of Our Work". Success'. The secret of success, is, doing your duty in that station of life to which it shall please God to call you. This has been our most successful year. 1st, Temporal; Here he gave a comparative note of finances for the four years of his service in York, and concluded that part of his record with, "Missions in full."

"Second–Spiritual; a revival; 35 added this year.

Third–Woman's Foreign Missionary Societies; growth in membership and in funds.

135. Quarterly Conference Record for York Circuit 1905-09.
136. Two loose pages inserted in Register 1905-09.

Fourth – Rosebuds – gradual gains.

The whole 'Monetary Service', 1st year $1214; 2nd year $1424; 3rd year $1399.; 4th year $1333. Total $5370.

The best success, – Revival constant every year; 135 added to the membership. Collections in full. This has been my prayer."

During his pastorate the Epworth League at Zion was abandoned and a weekly prayer service took its place, which was more effective; all indebtedness on church property was cancelled; the use of the new Methodist Hymnals was begun in Zion Church; York Circuit was transferred from Richmond District to Rappahannock District; and Providence Church was actively engaged in church extension at two points, Yorktown and Morrison.

The interest at Yorktown which was noted before the Civil War, followed by "a feeble Sunday School" there in 1870, and the purchase of a lot in Yorktown in 1896, was kept growing through the leadership of the Rev. R. N. Crooks, former pastor of York Circuit, and a few other Methodists of Yorktown, most of whom were members of Providence Church. A few were Zion members.

When the Rev. R. N. Crooks retired from the active ministry, he made his home in Yorktown, and in the early 1900's he held Sunday night services in the homes of the Methodist families of Yorktown and vicinity.

The women of the church started a project in 1908 toward the erection of a church-building in Yorktown. Through their labors, about $200 was raised. The interest became somewhat intensified through[137] "the election of a building committee for Yorktown Chapel" on July 12, 1909. Rev. R. N. Crooks, T. T. Hudgins and Rev. J. R. Eggleston were named to this committee. Lem Wright, a local carpenter was hired, and a single room about 28 by 36 feet was erected. Part of the building material used, was brought to Yorktown on small boats from Portsmouth.

There being insufficient funds to shut in the building, it became necessary for the little group of earnest Methodists to obtain a loan from the Peninsula Bank and Trust Co., in Yorktown. In their humble beginning, the members used carpenter-made benches for pews.

137. Quarterly Conference Records for York Circuit 1905-09.

It was some years later that the belfry, the metal ceiling, and space for the pulpit, were added. The lectern and pulpit chairs were given to the Church by the First Methodist Church of Hampton, through the efforts of Mrs. Gilroy Winder. Later the same church gave the communion table, through the efforts of Mrs. Margaret P. Crooks Smith.

When the church bell was purchased, it was the Ladies' Aid Society that financed this project. Some of the methods employed by the women for raising funds showed great ingenuity and zeal for the cause to which they were dedicated. The Methodists in Yorktown, both men and women labored untiringly until they reached their goal, of a Methodist Church in Yorktown.

At Morrison, Rev. John F. White, Local preacher and member of Providence, succeeded in the building of a small church there, known as White's Memorial Methodist Church. He conducted worship services there semi-monthly, traveling there by horse and buggy from his home in Dare. The Sunday School there, was active. When the Rev. J. E. White, son of the above, was stationed at Toano in James City County, he assisted his father at the Morrison Mission. Later, after the establishment of Hilton Village Methodist Church, "White's Memorial" was partly under its care. When the present Morrison Methodist Church was built, the little White's Memorial Church-building was sold to the Assembly of God Church.[138]

Rev. E. P. Parham was the pastor of York Circuit 1909-11. Until his leadership, further action was taken in the interest of the Yorktown group, as follows:[139] "Feb. 6, 1911 Resolved, that the Board of Trustees of Yorktown Church are hereby authorized . . . to borrow money or accept a conditional donation, or both, from the Board of Church Extension of the M.E. Church, South, not exceeding the sum of four hundred dollars for the purpose of finishing a church at Yorktown and to secure repayment . . . by mortgage . . . etc."

Another important transaction which took place in 1911 was the sale of the Grafton Chapel and lot. This had been pending for several years. The trustees completed the sale of the

138. Quoting Mrs. H. H. Hall, Cedar Lane, Newport News, Va., daughter of Rev. J. F. White.
139. Quarterly Conference Minutes, York Circuit 1910-14.

property to the Junior Order of American Mechanics and the Order of Red Men. Boundaries of the land were given. It adjoined the Parsonage property on two sides, the land of W. T. Wainwright on one side and fronted on the main road.

Rev. C. W. Turner came to York Circuit in 1911 and remained only one year. He lost a son by death while living at the parsonage in Grafton.

Rev. Turner was succeeded by Rev. W. G. Bates Jr. who served his first pastorate, at York. He left in the Fall of 1913.

Rev. R. G. Pullen and family took up the work on York Circuit 1913-14. His term of service covered four years and was marked by considerable growth. Mrs. Annie Pullen, his wife was a most efficient person and her knowledge of the work of the church, and her interest in it, caused some of the members to regard her as "assistant pastor".

York Circuit was transferred from Rappahanoock District to Norfolk District in 1913, during the pastorate of Mr. Pullen. Dr. George Wesley Jones was the Presiding Elder.

When the Pullen family left York, the work at both Zion and Providence was in a prosperous and growing condition.

Pastors[140] on the East York Circuit in York County for the next few years were Rev. R. N. Hartness 1913-15 and Rev. W. W. Royall 1915-18.

The year 1917 marked the one hundredth anniversary of the founding of Tabernacle Church in Poquoson, York Co. but there was no special celebration of the event.

Rev. John R. Eggleston followed Dr. Royall as preacher in charge of Tabernacle and Trinity, and he labored effectively four years, 1918-1922. It will be remembered that he had been pastor for four years of the sister-circuit, York in 1905-09.

In 1921, under his leadership Trinity Church was in need of a new church building to accommodate the expanding membership.[141] "Several revivals were held by Mr. Eggleston, during which the church auditorium could not seat the crowds. Thus the Official Board decided to erect a new, and much larger auditorium. A building committee was appointed, the members of

140. From a clipping in "Daily Press" newspaper in 1937.
141. Ibid.

which were R. L. Forrest Sr., Littleton Insley, W. R. Holloway, H. Topping, R. T. Hawkins, J. R. Pauls and West Topping."

"This committee, after much discussion decided to erect a modern brick auditorium that would seat approximately 700 persons. The new building was constructed across the front of the frame structure and the old building was used for the Church School. Completed in 1922, the building cost approximately, $30,000."

The Rev. H. L. Weston became the pastor of East York in November, 1922 and left in 1923.

"In 1917 Rev. A. B. Warwick was sent to York Circuit (Zion and Providence) as a supply preacher for one year. The minister who had been assigned to this field, stayed only long enough to preach one sermon at each church, and, his wife being unhappy with a rural assignment, they left the circuit. It was then, that Mr. Warwick took over the work.

[142]He was born in Nelson County, Va., August 24, 1857. He was a student at the University of Va., two years and was admitted on trial into the Virginia Conference Nov. 16, 1877". While he was pastor at York, he revised the church registers, erasing names of former members who had moved away, or had died. His report at the fourth Quarterly Conference made mention of "our Chapel property in Yorktown", and recommended that steps be taken to have the incoming pastor hold preaching services there at least once a month. He listed the membership at 193 for Providence and 242 at Zion, a total of 435 members on the Circuit.

When the Virginia Conference assignments were announced in November, 1918 the Rev. D. W. Jackson was sent to York Circuit. He served four years, and several interesting changes took place on the circuit through his leadership.

It was reported at the Quarterly Conference, held April 14, 1919 that the trustees of Zion Church were authorized to purchase the school house and land across the road opposite Zion Church, from the school trustees for $325. This transaction[143] was carried out, and later, the church trustees sold the school building at a public sale.

142. Lafferty's *Sketches of Va. Conference*, 1880 Edition, P. 201.
143. York County Va. Records Deed Book 36—P. 493.

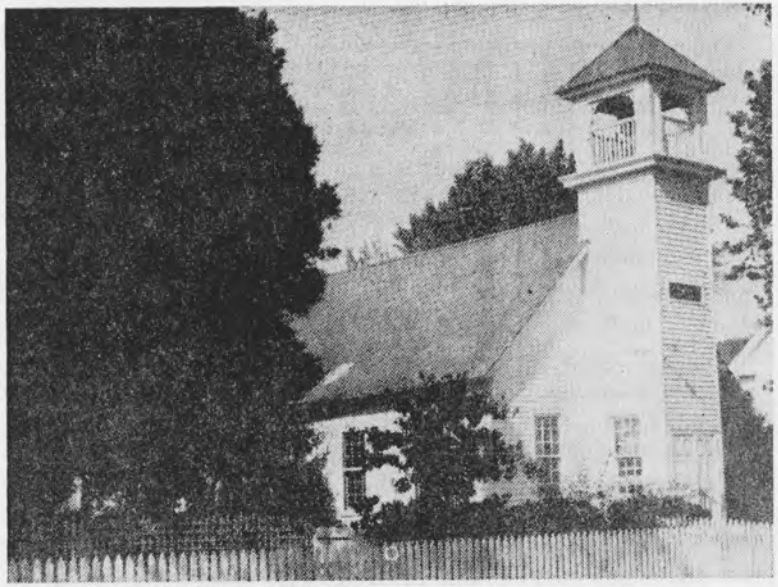
At the same Conference,[144] it was decided that Zion Church should be rebuilt and enlarged, and a building committee was appointed. The work started in the Fall of 1919 and was completed in the summer of 1920. The remodeling of the church was quite extensive, but the cost was kept to a minimum because of much gift labor. M. D. White and B. R. Richardson were the carpenters who supervised the construction. A cast iron bell was hung in the belfry and was the first bell at Zion Church, to peal, announcing church services.

Ninety-seven members were added to the Church rolls during Rev. Jackson's first year's service on York Circuit.

The second year of his ministry he planned to increase the service at Yorktown, and organize a Society there, thus changing its status from a Chapel to a Church. The building was repaired and redecorated; the Sunday School was in a progressive condition; and the group of Methodists who had been active in that area, some of whom were members of Providence Church, and a few from Zion, was organized by Mr. Jackson, into a Church, with 25 members. A dozen or more were transferred by letter from Providence and one or two from Zion, to Yorktown. At the third Quarterly Conference, held July 15, 1922 at Yorktown[145] it was "moved and adopted that the name of the Yorktown Church be Crooks' Memorial Methodist Church in memory of Rev. R. N. Crooks."

December 20, 1922 marked the one hundredth anniversary of Zion Church. There was no celebration of this momentious event. The Rev. Jackson and family, moved, in November, 1922, to Mathews County and the Rev. J. D. Hoiser came to York Circuit. Having arrived only six weeks prior to the anniversary date, he was not congnizant of its significance, and so he went about his regular pastoral duties, with no thought of a special celebration. The Official Board and the membership, likewise, did not realize that it was the Centennial year of their Church, and the opportunity to make of this date, a red letter event, passed by.

144. Quarterly Conference Register for York Circuit, 1919-1922.
145. Ibid—A loose paper, inserted in Conference minutes.



Crooks Memorial Methodist Church
Built in 1909-1919

The Present Tabernacle Methodist Church

CHAPTER IV

York County Methodist Churches, 1923-1959

The events of the last 35 years (1923-1958) are too recent to be history. Nevertheless, a short account of the happenings in the York County Methodist Churches should be included, as a matter of record.

On the East York Circuit[146] (Tabernacle and Trinity), the pastors for this period were Rev. A. W. Roten, 1923-24; Rev. W. L. Burks, 1924-28; Rev. H. L. Hastings, 1928-32; Rev. L. G. Crutchfield, 1932-35; Rev. B. E. Hudson, 1935-39; Rev. C. Ambrose Turner, 1939-43; Rev. Ira Astin, 1943-47; Rev. Ralph Yow, 1947-50.

During the pastorate of Rev. W. L. Burks, a church school building was added to the Tabernacle Church plant, containing class rooms and assembly rooms for the various departments. The addition was a frame, two-story structure, built at the rear of the church auditorium. Dr. J. J. Bradford, the Presiding Elder, dedicated the new building in 1927.

Under the leadership of the Rev. H. L. Hastings, the Trinity Church School annex was built in 1930. The old church building of frame construction which had been serving as Sunday School rooms was razed and the modern brick annex, with twenty-one classrooms, two assembly rooms, kitchen, and office, was built, at a cost of $30,000.

Other extensive alterations were made to the Trinity Church in 1948-49, which included the installation of a three-Manual Reuter pipe organ, and a rearrangement of the pulpit, choir loft and pews.

On the York Circuit, (Zion, Providence and Crook's Memorial) in 1923, the Rev. J. D. Hoiser was pastor of a three-point charge, that had formerly been only two churches. He held worship services at Crook's Memorial Church in the evening twice a month. At the other two churches the worship

146. Two Newspaper Clippings, Daily Press, 1937; Daily Press, April 16, 1950.

The Present Providence Methodist Church

services were held every Sunday as formerly. He stayed in York two years and was succeeded by Rev. J. T. Sewell whose term of service was 1925-1927. Other ministers have been Dr. S. J. Brown 1927 to March, 1929; Rev. Harry F. Justice 1929-32; Rev. J. T. Mills 1932-36; Rev. Paul R. Best 1936-1938; Rev. Eugene W. Rawlings 1938-40; Rev. O. R. Clarke 1940-44; Rev. Mack Thomasson, 1944-45; Rev. Merrill H. Barton 1945-50.

Dr. Brown died at the Parsonage in Grafton in March, 1929.

The third Providence Church building was erected in 1931. The frame building was torn down so that the new church could be built on the exact spot, and a beautiful, though small, brick church was completed in December, 1931, at a cost of about $12,000. The contractor was C. C. Vellines. The Rev. Harry Justice was pastor of York Circuit when this improvement was made.

In 1939-40 a new parsonage for York was built on property adjoining the old parsonage lawn, in Grafton. This took place while the Rev. Eugene W. Rawlings was pastor.

Part of the tract of land belonging to the parsonage had been sold some years ago, and after the erection of the new parsonage, the old house-and-yard was sold to Mr. E. C. Crockett.

When the Rev. O. M. Clarke[147] was pastor in charge of York Circuit he noted many changes that were taking place. He said at the second Quarterly Conference in 1942: "The quarter just ended has been most bewildering. Our entry into World War II, the seven-day work week, the pushing up of the clock in winter, the present unusual tire and gasoline situation – (both were rationed), all these and other things tend to distract from the regular routine of life. The attendance at both church and church school was varied – sometimes encouraging, and sometimes otherwise, especially at the night services."

The Providence Church celebrated its one hundredth anniversary with a week's activities September 17-24, 1950, during the pastorate of the Rev. Merrill Barton. Home Coming Day was held on Sunday, September 17th, with a dedication service and unveiling of a bronze plaque honoring the late Mr. and Mrs. Edward Davis, who gave the land on which the first, second, and present Providence Church buildings were erected. This service was conducted by Rev. John E. White, retired minister, and grandson of Mr. and Mrs. Davis. Rev. Percy D. White, who went from Providence into the ministry, and great grandson of Mr. and Mrs. Davis delivered the sermon. Rev. Merrill Barton, Pastor presented the speakers.

Other services during the week were conducted by Rev. A.Purnell Bailey, Dr. Walter Gum, former District Superintendent, and the following former pastors: Rev. E. W. Rawlings, Rev. W. G. Bates Jr., Rev. Paul R. Best, and Rev. J. T. Mills.

It was also during the pastorate of the Rev. Merrill Barton that the new Zion Church plant was begun. In order to expand sufficiently to meet the needs of the growing congregation, it was decided to erect the new church on the opposite side of the road on property which the church trustees bought in 1919 from the York County School board.

The family of the late Mr. and Mrs. G. A. Wornom gave a section of land adjoining the church property so as to make a large rectangular building-site, with ample parking space.

147. Quarterly Conference Minutes, 1940-44.

On August 23, 1949 the lines were stretched and the site marked off, for the modern brick building, with sanctuary 40 feet by 75 feet, and a three-story educational plant, 30 feet by 86 ft., containing 13 classrooms, social hall and all modern conveniences. Henry Tyssen Sr. of Williamsburg, was construction manager, and J. Wesley Ironmonger, great-grandson of two of the first trustees of Zion (1822), was the builder. Much gift

The Present Zion Methodist Church

labor went into its construction. A Cornerstone Ceremony was held May 27, 1950 when Bishop W. W. Peale, of the Virginia and North Carolina Conferences was the speaker. He was introduced by Dr. Frank L. Wells, District Superintendent. Rev. Merrill H. Barton opened the service and presented Dr. Walter Gum of Richmond who also participated in the ceremony.

May 20, 1951 was "Opening Day" at the new Zion. The Rev. Oscar Good was the minister.

In 1950 the two churches of East York, each became a station. Rev. O. B. Carter was sent to Tabernacle, and Rev. W. D. Williams, to Trinity.

Rev. E. D. Garris, and Rev. R. A. Craig have been ministers at Tabernacle since it became a station.

It was during the pastorate of Mr. Craig that the first unit of a modern church plant for Tabernacle was built. This construction is of cinderblock and brick and contains a modern social hall and kitchen, and many Sunday School rooms. The former Sunday School plant of frame construction, and the modernized frame sanctuary are still being used. Eventually they will be replaced by two other units of brick. The Rev. Earl Collie is the present pastor. (1959)

Dr. Harvey K. Swann[148] became pastor of Trinity Methodist Church in June, 1957. Soon plans were under way to build a commodious Sunday School annex, of brick construction matching the sanctuary and Educational plant. The 9,480 square foot addition filled an important need. The building was opened for services in May, 1959 – marking the seventy-fifth anniversary of the establishment of Trinity Church. Dr. Swann was the pastor at the opening services, and in June, 1959 he was transferred to another station. The Rev. Eugene Wright was sent to Trinity, and is the present pastor (1959).

In 1950 the churches of York Circuit also made some changes. Crook's Memorial Church, Yorktown joined with Denbigh Church, Warwick, to make a charge, and both Providence and Zion became stations.

At Crook's Memorial two additions have been added at the rear of the sanctuary to provide facilities for the church school. When the church became a part of a two point charge, its program was greatly enlarged. Worship services and Sunday School every Sunday morning and all other organizations of a modern Methodist Church were included in its program. Its ministers since 1950 have been Rev. Hudson Hornsby, Rev. Irvin R. Jackson, Rev. Robert Mayou, Dr. Saunders, and the present (1959) pastor, Rev. Harry Copley, who has been serving this church about three years.

Since Providence has been a station, its pastors have been Rev. Marvin White, Dr. R. B. Proctor and Rev. Leroy Davis.

The parsonage property, in Grafton had to be divided when the three churches separated. Accordingly, Crook's Memorial and

148. Clipping "Daily Press" Dec. 14, 1958.

The Present Trinity Methodist Church

Providence sold their shares of the property to Zion Church. Immediately, the Providence membership made plans to erect a modern brick parsonage within a few hundred yards of the Church in Dare. It was soon completed and the minister's family moved in. The present pastor of Providence is the Rev. Leroy Davis, who is serving his third year.

The minister of Zion Church, Rev. Oscar Good and his family lived in the parsonage in Grafton, two years, while a new parsonage of brick construction was being erected on a lot adjoining the Zion Church property. This was completed in the Spring of 1954; and the minister's family occupied it until June, 1958.

In the Spring of 1958 the Zion Parsonage in Grafton was sold to the congregation of Yorkminister Presbyterian Church.

The new Zion Methodist Church was dedicated, on May 12, 1957 by Bishop Paul N. Garber, presiding Bishop of the Virginia Conference.

Early in 1958 amplified electric chimes were installed at Zion.

In June, 1958 the Rev. Forrest S. Wagoner was assigned the pastorate at Zion Church, and is at present (1959) its minister. Under his leadership a steady growth has been noted. There has been an increase of about 50 in membership. The Sunday School is full to overflowing, necessitating plans for an additional Church School Annex; the land on which to build it has been purchased, and a building committee has been chosen.

The people of these churches and congregations, compassed about with a great cloud of witnesses, grateful for their heritage, mindful of the sacrifices of their fathers in the faith, have desired to pass on to posterity the graces and benefits of a strong Methodist Church in York County, Va., and have labored to this end.

"Faith of Our Fathers; Living Still."
"O how our hearts leap high with joy
Whenever we hear that glorious word—
Faith of Our Fathers; Holy faith;
We will be true to thee till Death;"

(signed) Mrs. Elizabeth Hogg Ironmonger

Oct. 1, 1959